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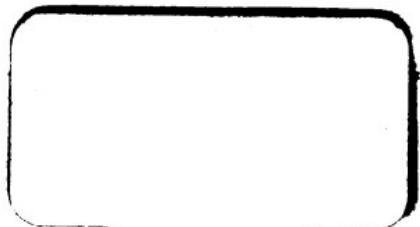


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H. W.



O

AN

# OFFERING OF SYMPATHY

To the Afflicted:

ESPECIALLY TO

PARENTS BEREAVED OF THEIR CHILDREN.

BEING A COLLECTION FROM MANUSCRIPTS  
NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

WITH

AN APPENDIX OF EXTRACTS  
FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS.

---

BY FRANCIS PARKMAN.

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THIRD EDITION.

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**TO**

**The Friends,**

**WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THESE PAGES;**

**AND TO**

**Bereaved Parents,**

**FOR WHOSE SOLACE THEY ARE ESPECIALLY DESIGNED,**

**THIS LITTLE VOLUME**

**IS DEDICATED BY**

**A PARENT.**

---

**Is it well with the child?**

**And she answered it is well.**

**For of such is the kingdom of God.**



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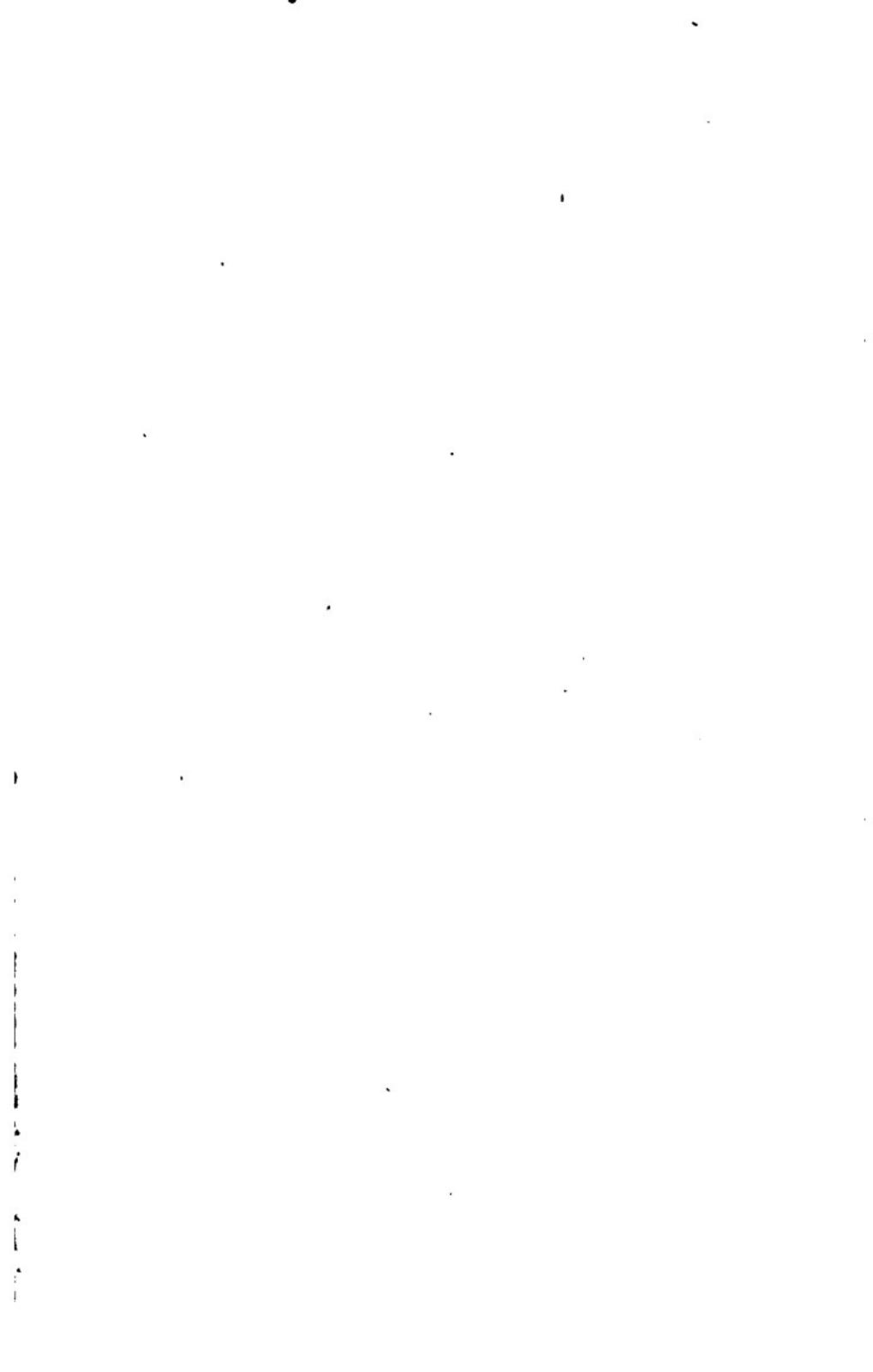
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## INTRODUCTION.

In offering this little book for the consolation of the afflicted, the compiler wishes to contribute something to the supply of a want, that has been much felt among us. The children of sorrow are at all times a numerous class of mankind. It pleases God that they should always be with us ; and we ourselves must in our turn become a part. Notwithstanding the many valuable treatises on other subjects of religion, both the experience of ministers in their offices of consolation, and the personal trials of all christians sufficiently attest the need there yet exists of works, which may meet the various conditions of sorrow, and yield the instruction and comforts they require.

It will at once be perceived, how largely the writer has been indebted to the contributions of others. These form the greatest and most valuable part of the work. And were he at liberty to explain the sources, whence some passages, particularly of the 'Correspondence,' were derived, or the nature and variety of the grief, for the relief of which others of these pieces were expressly written, he doubts not, that independently of their intrinsic value, they would command the lively interest of the reader. He can

only express his grateful acknowledgements to each and to all of those friends, who have so effectually aided his design, either by their own productions, or from those private stores, which sympathy in their bereavements had enabled them to gather ; and from which, in the kindness ever found in the bosom of sanctified affliction, they were willing to comfort others with the same comforts, with which they themselves had been comforted of God.

As may be inferred from the variety of the topics here treated, these pages are designed, and it is hoped they may not be found unsuited, for the consolation of all sorrow. Yet there will be perceived a particular reference to that grief which is suffered by parents, under the loss of children. Of the trials of domestic life, appointed of our heavenly Father, none are of more frequent occurrence, and none, perhaps, cause a more poignant sorrow, than does this. ‘I have lost my children, and am desolate,’ is the natural language of bereaved paternal affection. When the infant, that had lately entered upon existence, or the lovely child, whose powers were just unfolding,

‘Sweet to the world and grateful to the skies,’

in the fullness of health, in the sweetness of innocence, and the freshness of hope, is at a moment taken from us, who shall utter the sorrow, especially of the maternal heart? Yet, heavy as it is, it must be borne for the most part in silence. The stranger knows not of it. The acquaintance cannot intermeddle with it; and even in the confidence of tender

friendship it may not be wise often to intrude it. It is to be endured, therefore, rather than to be uttered, except to Him, whose ear is always open ; whose pitying eye is upon his children, and who counts their tears.

From the frequency, moreover, and sometimes the wide extent of such calamities, no less than from the private nature of the sorrow they occasion, they can seldom be made the direct topics of consolation from the pulpit. The reasons are obvious, and they are sufficient. Such subjects would be in danger of engrossing a disproportionate share of the public instruction ; and it were unreasonable to call upon the sympathies of a promiscuous assembly for that, which of necessity could be felt only by a few. Hence, the greater need of books of consolation, which may meet the private grief ; which may go with us, as a chosen friend, into the secret chamber ; may cheer the heavy hours of solitude, to which even those most richly favoured of christian friendship, will, at such periods, be left ; and like the unfailing word, whose ‘entrance giveth light,’ and is itself the exhaustless source of comfort, may remain to cheer and to instruct, long after the offerings, and with them the excitements of sympathy, have ceased ; and when even our nearest friends may be imagining, that the grief, they were at first eager and assiduous to console, has passed away.

Of the compilations of this class, which have already been furnished, few appear altogether adapted to their purpose. The office of consolation is, in truth, one of difficulty ; and though always welcom-

ed from the kind and good, and its simplest expressions, if only uttered in sincerity, will not fail of their intention, yet, for the most acceptable performance of it, something more is needed than earnest or good feeling. A respectful regard for the afflicted ; a certain reverence of sorrow, forbidding the intrusion of what is doubtful, or might be the occasion of pain, is essential to him, who would impart comfort. The friends of Job, though too ready to reproach him, gave one evidence, at least, of a genuine sympathy, when they sat down with him for a season in silence, ‘and spake not a word, knowing, that his grief was great.’ Now in many of the treatises, usually referred to on this subject, we perceive a lamentable deficiency in that spirit, which in the more familiar expressions of condolence, would prescribe a like deference. In some of them we find a coarseness, in others a quaintness of language, which are offensive. And not seldom are points of doubtful disputation officially obtruded as essential to an acceptable faith, or to the right use of adversity ; while the most simple and sustaining views of God’s paternal providence, of his merciful designs, and some of the choicest consolations, which spring from the religion of Christ, are as strangely overlooked.

With the belief, that works of this description are yet needed among us, and with a desire to meet, in some measure, a want, which the course of professional duty had shown to be urgent, the writer presents this little volume to the bereaved and afflicted. Possibly it may add something to a confidence, essential to the efficacy of the sympathy, it expresses ; at least, it may obtain indulgence for those portions of the

book, which alone will need it, if he add, that it was suggested by a severe domestic calamity, by which a very lovely child, in full health and promise, was suddenly taken away. He will be happy, if a private grief shall have thus ministered to the consolation of others ; if a little child, who had become the object, perhaps of a too fond dependence, shall by the grief of her early departure, have taught him more effectually how to sympathize with the sorrowful.

**ADVERTISEMENT TO THIRD EDITION.**

THE compiler has been gratified to learn, that this little book has afforded consolation to many in their affliction, and particularly to that class of mourners, for whose benefit it was specially designed. In this third edition the plan has been somewhat extended; and with some corrections and improvements of the former, will be found an original article by a friend, and some additional selections in the appendix adapted to the wants of the sorrowful of all descriptions.

BOSTON, DEC. 25, 1841.

## Duty of Preparation for Adversity.

---

Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us — arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.—**ST. PETER.**

It is the province of religion to prepare us for the vicissitudes of life. It is the peculiar province of the religion of Jesus Christ to inculcate such truths, to suggest such motives, to inspire such hopes, as shall prepare us to meet all the appointments of God — both what he ordains, and what he permits — with a confiding temper. For this, as well as for other great purposes, it holds up to our view and imitation the example of Jesus Christ, in the faithfulness of his obedience and the cheerfulness of his submission to the will of his Father. And one of his apostles, in anticipating the sufferings to which his first followers, and we may add his disciples in every age, were to be called, exhorts that they arm themselves with the same mind ; that they put on the same holy courage, with which their divine Master met the trials to which he was appointed. St. Paul also, with

a fine allusion to the christian state as a warfare, exhorts, that they put on the whole armor of God; that they place themselves, as it were, in the attitude of men, who expected and would prepare themselves to meet calamity; standing perfect and complete in all the will of God.

These precepts, though addressed to christians of an earlier age, lose nothing of their application to us, who, with them, are pilgrims in an uncertain world, and must expect vicissitude. And it is obviously the suggestion of wisdom and piety to inquire, how we may prepare ourselves for such changes, and with what temper they should be sustained.

1. Preparation for sorrow implies, as we may first remark, a reasonable expectation of it;—an expectation founded on just views, such as reason, observation, experience, and the word of God enforce, of the uncertainty of our condition here; of the frailty of our possessions, and of our lives; of the designs of God concerning us in this world, and of the influence of adversity to prepare us for a better. He, who considers his feeble frame; the diseases and accidents to which he is liable; the narrow term, within the bounds of which the longest life is limited; the uncer-

tainties to which the securest possessions are exposed ; who looks around the community in which he lives, and marks the ravages that a few years can make upon the comforts, treasures, and friendships, even of the most prosperous ; who sees one generation passing away, and the places that knew his friends knowing them no more ; the domestic abode changing its inhabitants ; families, once numerous and opulent, flourishing in peace and honor, utterly gone, or reduced in a few individuals that survive to a comfortless dependence ; their splendid mansions, once the abode of pleasure, the seat of generous hospitality, and the refuge of the needy, laid in melancholy ruins, or transformed into resorts of business, or as resting-places of the traveller ; when he visits the house of God, and with a few annual revolutions observes what new appearances are presented, and looks in vain for faces he had long known and welcomed there — when, I say, he considers all this, he will think it reasonable to expect change. He will not flatter himself that he is to be exempted ; nor vainly imagine that his mountain will stand, while all things else are moving. He will perceive, that the principles of change are inherent in the very

nature and condition of his being. The whole history of the community in which he lives, all that he is called to observe or suffer, will conspire with the clear monitions of God's word to teach him that preparation for sorrow is the part of wisdom; that however bright may be his prospects, however large, and to the earthly eye, secure his possessions, however sacred and endearing the relations by which he is united, he must not hope for exemption. Nay, that in proportion to the variety and extent of his comforts, to the number of the friends on whom his heart relies, is his exposure to change.

2. This duty of preparation for the loss of our blessings demands from us also a faithful improvement of them, while they are continued. The thought of their uncertain stay, and that at any moment they may be withdrawn, will mingle itself with our uses of them, and will moderate also our expectations concerning them. We shall not fail to enjoy them, for this is demanded from our gratitude. This is the clear dictate of duty; and it is no part of the christian, who believes in God, and believes also in Christ, trusts in a perfect Providence, and has a hope full of immortality, to go "sorrowing all his days." But he

will improve them as one who remembers that this is not the scene of enjoyment or of rest ; that it is in the world to come, not that in which he lives, that he must look for the fullest gratifications of his affections, and for his highest pleasures.

Who of us, but may have suffered some pangs of regret, when a gift has been taken from us, that we have prized it so little, or so negligently improved it ?- It is one of the most common evidences of our wayward dispositions, to think little of the good we possess, and much of that we have lost. Our blessings rise in our estimation, as they are departing from us ; and when once they are gone, memory and fancy recall, with a perverse fidelity, all that there was in them for our gratitude and enjoyment. We value highly the opportunities of usefulness, or the means of happiness, which we can no longer command. We think tenderly of the scenes, from which we are removing ; and especially, if we are to quit them, as we think, for ever, how fondly and sadly do we number the days of comfort and delight we have spent in them ! The most indifferent objects of inanimate nature array themselves to our busy, our diseased imaginations, in unwonted beau-

ties. And we can then understand what was meant by the captive Israelites, when mourning in a strange and distant country, over the desolations of their temple : " Thy servants take pleasure in its stones ; and favor the dust thereof."

Particularly of the friendships and endear-ed connexions of life, when absence inter-rupts, or death is commissioned to sever— how tender, how sacred, the recollections ! We dwell with mournful veneration on the lips, that are soon to be silenced in the grave. We summon all that love and gratitude can suggest, to heighten our esteem of the friend we had enjoyed, but can enjoy no longer.

Now it is the part of wisdom, it is essen-tial to our preparation for the day of calamity, to be faithful to our blessings, while yet they are with us. It is wise to protect ourselves from unavailing sorrows, and the reproach of undervalued or neglected privileges. Christian, hath God imparted to thee of the fulness of his bounty ? Hath he intrusted thee with wealth, and made thee responsible, by placing at thy disposal the resources of happiness ? Then must thou act as his steward, and employ thy treasure and opportunity to his glory ; then must there be with thee the spir-

it of moderation, and the heavenly mind, to control and sanctify thy use of things temporal, "lest thy table be a snare, and that which God gave for thy welfare, become a trap."

Are you blest, my brother, in the friends of your heart? Are there yet with you those, and perhaps not a few, whom your soul loveth? Are you walking in the light, and are still gladdened by the presence of a venerated parent, in the wisdom of whose counsel, in the purity and integrity of whose life, in whose tried and faithful affection, you can securely trust? Is it yet with you as in the days of your youth, when the secret of God was upon your tabernacle? And the wife of your bosom, and the children of your hopes — are they about you? Then may you rejoice — yea, and you should rejoice. Only remember, that at the word of God, these choicest of your temporal blessings may be withdrawn. And so live with your friends as heirs of the grace of life, that when they are gone, you may call up their memories without distress; and find them hereafter with the treasure laid up in heaven.

3. Another most important preparation for the calamities which may be appointed, is in the faithful discharge of duty, and in the

answer of a good conscience. "It is better," says an apostle, "that ye suffer in well doing than for evil doing." In the strength of an approving conscience we can meet with composure the chastisements of God; and in the light of an approving conscience we can see the mercy that is mingled with judgment. But wretched indeed is that man, who is compelled to endure at once the rebukes of heaven, and the upbraiding of a heart not right with God. The spirit of a man, we are told, will sustain his infirmity. The natural vigor and courage of his soul, sustained by religious faith, may avail him under the ordinary trials of his lot. "But if," as observes a wise interpreter of that text, "within him the disease of sin be rankling; if that which should support, serves but to torment him, to what quarter can he look for relief? To what medicine shall he apply, when that which might have cured his wounds is itself diseased and wounded?"

Besides, let it not be forgotten, that it is one effect of adversity to awaken the conscience; to give tenderness and susceptibility to the moral feelings. The palliatives we may administer in the day of prosperity may prove successful. They may soothe us for a

season. They may silence the clamors of self-reproach. It is possible, that amidst the engagements of business or the allurements of pleasure, the festive scenes of youth or the more sober passions and engrossing cares of advancing life, the monitor within may never be heard. But let God speak the word, and commission his ministers of justice ; let the sinner be stripped of the riches, in which he had trusted ; let pain and disease rack his frame, and thus teach him that he is mortal, and shall die ; let death enter his dwelling, and bear from him one, and perhaps another, in whom he had trusted, and convince him by his own personal sufferings of the vanity of his best possessions ; and then, if amidst all or any of these visitations from heaven, conscience is inflicting also its secret torments — miserable indeed is that man.

If then we would fortify ourselves against the day of trouble, and secure, when we shall most need them, the strength and solace of religion, we must keep to ourselves the answer of a good conscience ; and be able amidst all care and grief, to say, “our rejoicing is this ; that in simplicity and sincerity we have lived in the world.” “Behold, now, my witness is in heaven, and my record with the Most High.”

4. A just estimate also of the objects of this world, and of those especially which are usually regarded as essential to happiness, will assist us to meet its trials. The conviction too of our ignorance of what is best for us, and a filial readiness to commit to the "only wise God" all our lot, will fortify our spirits. Knowing, as the apostle teaches, that the things that are seen are temporal, we shall lift our eyes and our hearts to the things eternal. In the faith and hopes of a true disciple, we shall look for strength amidst weakness, and for the solace of our griefs, to that better country, where nothing is transient; even to the city that hath foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God.

5. And lastly, we may effectually arm ourselves against every evil that can assail us here, by an unqualified trust in God; by the conviction that all which he ordains is wise and kind; and that nothing is permitted, or can take place under his control, that shall not work for good, to them that love him. For all the ways of God are mercy and truth, to them that fear him. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. To the faithful children of the Most High, who endure and suffer well, there is

given by Christ Jesus the assurance of faith, that what they know not now, they shall know hereafter ; that this God, of whom the Son has taught them, shall be their guide even unto death. Nor will he leave them there. His rod and staff will be with them through the dark valley ; and through the ages of eternity, he will be their salvation and joy.

F. P.

## **Resignation to the Divine Will.**

---

**It is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth him good.**

THIS is the language of resignation. In these words of the prophet, we may mark the temper with which every child of God must prepare himself to meet the appointments of his heavenly Father. To ordain, to bestow, and to chasten, is the prerogative of God. To obey, to receive, to submit, is the duty of man. The sovereign arbiter of our lot, the God who formed and fashioned us, holds an undeniable claim upon our blessings and hopes. Nor is it more of the glory of his bounty to give, than it is of the faithfulness of his judgments to take away. This is a lesson which sooner or later we must learn ; and never shall we have found the true source of comfort, nor peace to our souls, amidst the disquietudes of life, till we have acquired this spirit of unreserved submission ; till with a filial temper we can look upon ourselves, our friends, our best possessions, and most cherished hopes, and then

look upward to the God of heaven, whose bounty gave them all, and say, "Lord, here are we:—Let him do with us as it seemeth good unto him."

Resignation is submission without murmur to the will of God; the yielding of our blessings at his call. It is not indifference or insensibility, but acquiescence to what we know and feel to be an evil, simply because it is his holy pleasure. It is therefore a sentiment at once of the understanding and of the heart; of the mind, as it comprehends, of the heart, as it loves and desires to devote itself to God. It is a temper essential to the character of children, and to their comfort also under the most common trials of life. We may find place for its exercise, even while in the possession of much that to the worldly eye passes for prosperity. For amidst the fairest and the brightest scenes of life, many disappointments, many troubles may arise to demand our submission. Under trials of this class, as well as all those afflictions which are inseparable from our condition here, the very terms on which we hold existence, many topics of consolation are readily suggested. We can remember the gracious

design of such affliction ; the uncertainty of all earthly good ; the blessings that are yet remaining, and the mercy, therefore, that is mingled with the judgment. But there are cases of peculiar and aggravated grief. And when sorrow cometh in like a flood ; when Jehovah, in some awful providence, is passing before us as in thick clouds of the sky, and his waves and billows are rolling over us ; when by a desolating stroke he spoils us for ever of the fondest object of earthly dependence, the soul of the submissive sufferer can find rest in God alone. It forsakes those inferior objects on which, under a less calamity, it might have reposed. It overlooks even those subordinate truths which might have been sufficient for a less poignant grief ; and humbling itself before the majesty of heaven, it implores refuge from him alone. It says, “ My soul, wait thou only upon God — my expectation is from Him.”

Nor is this sentiment of complete submission, after the calamity is appointed, in the smallest degree incompatible with a previous earnestness of entreaty that it may be averted. Before the divine pleasure concerning us or our friends is determined, we are permitted to express the desires of our souls.

We are encouraged, nay—blessed be his name for this privilege of prayer—we are commanded to pray for what seemeth good to us, provided it is good also to him. While the child was yet alive, said David, I fasted and prayed; for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? And the Son of God, that pattern of all virtue, before he expressed the deep submission of his soul, had thrice earnestly prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” But when he knew assuredly that the cup was appointed, silent acquiescence took the place of prayer. “The cup, which my Father hath given me—shall I not drink it?” Thus also should it ever be with us. When fear of sorrow presses upon the heart; when, in near or distant view, the tempest of adversity seems gathering around us; especially at that sad hour, when the King of Terrors is approaching to separate those who knew but one heart and one hope—then, amidst the tumult and perplexity of grief, we may pray to God. We may entreat with the importunity of prayer, that the cup may pass. But as soon as a sovereign God has signified his pleasure, and death has fulfilled

the decree, and borne beyond the reach of supplication or tears, the object of our love — then comes the costly sacrifice of faith, the demanded homage of our submission. Then must we be still, and know that it is God. Then must we say with him, who hath taught us of the Father, "Not my will, but thine be done."

It becomes us to make this the prevailing temper of our minds under all adversity, and even in our darkest hours, in the loss of what of earthly good was most precious to our souls, we must lift our filial eye to heaven, and though it be amidst tears, that nature cannot and religion requires not to restrain, we must say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

F. P.

## Resignation to the Divine Will.

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### PART SECOND.

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The cup which my Father hath given me — shall I not drink it? — JESUS CHRIST.

THERE are many reasons why we should accept the cup which our heavenly Father offers us; why we should cherish and exhibit the spirit, of which our Master has here given us the beautiful example. We admit that it is the cup of sorrow — for this, the very duty of which we are speaking implies, — and that it is sometimes mingled in bitterness. It may be sickness and pain, from which nature shrinks instinctively; it may be reproach, or wounded friendship, or disappointed hope, in which the heart only can know of its own anguish. It may be bereavement, spoiling us of the much-loved, the most cherished object of our soul, and turning affection and joy to darkness and dust. It may be the cup of death, the last enemy which cometh to all and may come to us,

when it is least desired; yet, shall we not drink it? For consider the wisdom and love, the compassion and the faithfulness, with which it is mingled.

1. It is appointed of God; of him, the sovereign arbiter, the creator of all worlds, on whom the universe depends, by whose might it is upheld, with whose glory it is filled, in whom we ourselves live, and move, and have a being. It is appointed of him, the omnipotent and all-wise, who set the sun in the heavens and kindled the stars; who clothes the earth in beauty and paints every flower of the field, and satisfies the wants of every living thing; but at whose rebuke the pillars of heaven tremble, and the everlasting hills do bow. Of him, who dwells in light inaccessible, and in glory which no eye hath seen; but who can make darkness also his pavilion, and cover the heavens with sackcloth, and seal up the stars. Can we refuse it from him, whose righteousness and truth, like his wisdom and his power, knows no limits and admit no change: who doeth what he pleaseth, and whom none may resist?

This view of the sovereignty of God, of his irresistible power and unalienable right, may serve, in the hour of overwhelming

sorrow, to silence the murmuring or rebellious thought. It may rebuke the most presumptuous, who would resist, if they could, the decrees of heaven. But to the true child of God, whomingles his reverence of an infinite majesty with confidence in an unerring wisdom, it produces far nobler conceptions and worthier feelings. It awakens that salutary reverence, that holy fear, which with filial love is inseparable from true devotion, and which can find even in the tender mercies of a being like God, something grand and humbling to the soul. "Thou shalt fear the Lord and his goodness," is a command of Jehovah, perfectly compatible with the highest exercise of that goodness itself — a goodness which is at once so glorious in its manifestations, so mighty and so gracious, both when it gives and when it takes, that it becomes the object of our filial awe as well as trust; and therefore it is declared, that "the nations of the earth shall fear and tremble for the goodness he hath shown them."

2. But beside the sovereignty of God, there are views of his paternal character more peculiarly adapted to soothe and sustain the soul. "The cup which *my Father*

hath given me—shall I not drink it?" Can you refuse it, child of God, from your father, your wisest, kindest, and most faithful friend? From him, the giver of all life and hope, who breathed you from his spirit, gave you an existence in this world, and a soul to reflect his image and share his immortality? Can you refuse it from him, who rocked the cradle of your infancy; lent you parents and kind friends to sustain you, when you had no power to sustain yourself; who has spread for you, each day, his liberal table; upheld you every moment by his parental arm; from whose exhaustless bounty you have every thing you enjoy, and every thing you hope? Who in your prosperity kindles for you the smile of congratulation, causing others to rejoice with you, and gladdens you by the solace of sympathy? who has never forgotten you amidst all your forgetfulness of him? Will you refuse it, child of affliction, from him, who has not only made all nature contribute to your good, but has opened to the eye of your faith a brighter world than nature can promise, for the light and salvation of your soul? From him, who has enriched you with all spiritual blessings, through Christ Jesus;

provided for you in his gospel a supply of all spiritual want, a remedy for all ills, a solace for all grief, and hopes that are full of immortality? Will you refuse it from him, your God and Father, who has sent his own Son to bless you; and to teach you that all his government and all his law, in every part and dispensation, alike in its gifts and inflictions, is a law of love?

How inestimable is this assurance of the paternal character of God, when we are called to endure the chastisements of his hand. We should never cease to bless him, that amidst the clouds and darkness that hang around him, faith can penetrate the gloom, and see him as a Father. Faith can hear the voice speaking, "I, even I, am He, that comforteth thee. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the floods, they shall not overflow thee, for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." And the author and finisher of this faith has declared, "The Father himself loveth you. Let not your hearts be troubled."

F. P.

**Sufferings and Deaths of Children Consistent  
WITH THE  
Divine Goodness.**

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The child, that is born unto thee, shall surely die.

II SAMUEL, 12, 14.

IF we put out of view the existence of moral evil, the sufferings and death of young children present the most difficult circumstance in the divine providence. We feel neither surprise, nor a disposition to repine, when the infirm old man is removed from a world which he can no longer serve nor enjoy. When death lays its grasp upon the vigorous and useful, we find solace in the recollection of the good which they have done, and in the proofs they have given of preparation for other scenes of improvement. If pain or sickness visit one who can understand and use it as moral discipline, we perceive the wisdom that provides in bodily suffering the means of lasting benefit to the mind. But that an infant, of a few days or months old, should endure severe distress,

and be called to resign the life, of which it had scarcely become conscious ; or that the child who was just beginning to discover the powers with which he was intrusted, should be snatched away, as if in mockery of hope, is a circumstance which it does not seem so easy to reconcile with the benevolence of the Deity.

Yet there are considerations to satisfy us that the providence which permits suffering and death to come upon little children, is not inconsistent with the goodness of God.

We must not overstate the difficulty, or present it in a stronger light than can be justified by facts. In considering the evils incident to childhood, we must be mindful also of its pleasures. Infancy is seldom called to endure an excess of pain. Its motions, its smiles, its moments of quiet wakefulness, are evidences of happy feeling. There are indications of the exercise of intellect and affection at a very early age. It may be impossible for us to estimate the amount of happiness that has been experienced ; but it is a very rare occurrence that a child of a few months, or even a few days old, dies without having found, in the short period of its existence here, a balance of good over evil.

Life has been, on the whole, a blessing ; and therefore no argument is furnished against the divine benevolence.

Neither is it just to say that children cannot receive benefit from sickness. It not unfrequently preserves them from other evils to which they might be exposed. Besides this, there is that beautiful law of our nature, by which attendance on the wants of the suffering endears to us the object of our kindness. A child to whom a mother has been devoted during months of illness, is regarded by her with more tender though not more sincere affection, than that which she feels for her other children ; and a compensation is thus provided, both for maternal anxiety and for infantile suffering.

In regard to the death of children, it may be observed, that if we are believers in the revelation of the gospel, we look upon every human being, however brief the term of its residence on earth, as an heir of immortality. This life is the passage through which the soul enters the spiritual world. Whether there are other avenues, by which that world receives increase of the number of its inhabitants, we do not know. This may be the only state whence accessions are made to the

immortal family of heaven. But on this fact we may rely with the confidence of christian faith—that the souls of those who die in early childhood exchange the garment of mortality for an incorruptible life. Here there is occasion for praise rather than sorrow. In creating a spirit to be a partaker of his own eternity, God is pleased to intrust it, for a short time, to the care of human parents. They behold the dawn of an endless day—the first impulses of a mind that shall never cease to act. Is not this a privilege that demands devout acknowledgment? Is it reasonable to complain because it is not of longer continuance? To have introduced a soul to eternal glory is, methinks, a just occasion for gratitude and joy. We are anxious to have the precious things of earth in our possession, though we can retain them but a little while. We esteem it a favor, if a friend commits to our charge, for a few days only, a valuable picture, or even a rich flower, when its beauty is concealed in the bud. And is it not a favor to have the precious things of heaven lent to us? to have souls committed to our charge, though their beauty be not unfolded; and they be taken away while yet in the germ?

We might, on the other hand, putting aside

the testimony of revelation, derive from the death of children a presumption in favor of the doctrine of immortality. For let it be admitted, that all the elements of human character are wrapped up in the infant mind, and it will be difficult for us, I think, to believe that God would bring into existence, every year, thousands, nay millions of minds, containing the seeds of perfection, only to be destroyed by death. Such fickleness of purpose, or inability to execute a design, or indifference to its success—for to one or other, or all of these causes must we ascribe this result—might be found in man; but are inconsistent with the character of God. Let it be supposed that the child possesses all the capacities which, should it arrive at adult age, would exist in the man; and their present immaturity suggests the probability of their developement elsewhere, should it be prevented here. The child that has just awakened to the consciousness of a rational nature; the sinless infant, whose capacities have never been brought into action; shall he drop into annihilation, before the humanity with which he is endowed shall have had opportunity for exercise? Is it not more probable that the sun, which has shed a beneficial light and

has rejoiced in its course, shall sink into the domains of everlasting darkness, than that the luminary which has shot a single beam across the morning sky shall be stricken forever from the lights of the creation ?

'The loss of children seems to bring us into acquaintance with the world of spirits. It is true, after the death of any relative or friend whom we tenderly loved, that the unseen state appears to have been opened to our view ; we at least know some of its inhabitants. A change takes place in our feelings concerning another world ; it has acquired in our judgment more of the character of reality ; it is nearer to us ; we have formed a permanent connexion with it. It is not only the abode of angels, of whom we know so little, and of Jesus, whom, though we love, we have not seen, but of one whom we have seen and known and loved — one like ourselves, of the same race of beings. Our minds are affected, as when a member of our family removes to a distant country, of which we have read, and believed what others have written ; but now we have a more immediate sense of its existence, and though our friend should not write to us, yet our knowledge of his residence there makes us feel that we have some

interest in the place: it is not altogether a strange land. So when our faith beholds a friend passing the barriers of time, we feel that we sustain a personal relation to eternity, and through our former intimacy with him, from whom we shall no more receive intelligence, we are connected with the affairs of the spiritual world. This feeling is certainly not less deep or active, when the parent has resigned his child to the power of death, than after other forms of bereavement. It probably is then awakened in its full strength, especially in the mother's heart. When the infant over whom she has watched with mingled joy and anxiety, who has lain in her bosom, and whose life has been almost identified with her own, is taken from her sight, the tie is not broken which bound her to the being with whom she had this intimate union. The chain of sympathies, by which they were drawn so closely together, is untwined, only to be extended from this to another world. The parent regards the state of the departed, wherever and whatever it may be, as possessing something which was once hers, and in which she had a more absolute property than any one else, excepting God. That state, therefore, cannot be to her altogether un-

known ; it holds what was once her treasure, her delight, her hope, and it is no longer a world to which she is a stranger. The advantages of this sense of connexion with the invisible and the future are obvious. If it be not cherished to such a degree as to interfere with the discharge of present duty, or the enjoyment of blessings that remain, it is highly valuable, by withdrawing the mind from its dependence upon the things of earth, and infusing a tone of spirituality into the general tenor of its feelings.

There is yet another view of the connexion between the two worlds, of which the earthly guardian becomes sensible through the death of a child, and which may even be said to be created by this event. The infant is taken away before it is capable of self-direction. It will need teachers and protectors there as well as here. It will not be left alone ; it is borne by ministering spirits into the household of the saints, or into some one of the bright companies of angels, from whom those will be selected who shall be intrusted with its education. The offices, which parental love was anxious to perform on earth, will be rendered by inhabitants of heaven. Powers, that were scarce opened to the light

of discipline here, will be unfolded under the tutelage of the blessed ; where the infirmities and errors that reduce the benefits of instruction here, will not embarrass the pupil or the teacher. Mothers, your children have found other friends, whose love is as pure and whose care is more judicious than yours would have been. They have been embraced in the arms of spiritual affection ; sickness and pain they left with the flesh, and their immortal wants shall have abundant supply. Fathers, your sons will receive a better education than you could have given them, though your lives had been devoted to their improvement. How peculiar and intimate a connexion is here established between earth and heaven, between mortal parents and the celestial guardians of their offspring ! Imagination must be checked, or it will, with such materials of thought, employ itself amidst visions of the spiritual world, to the neglect of the demands which our present life urges.

Another and a distinct benefit, of which the sufferings and death of children may be the occasion, is a better acquaintance with the character of God. He has chosen the paternal relation as that through which he

would reveal himself to mankind, by the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is as a father that he would be known, and loved, and feared, and obeyed, and imitated. It is as a father that he observes, chastises, assists, and judges us. It is as a father that he loves us. The more perfect, therefore, is our idea of the parental relation, the nearer may we approach to a conception of his character, at least in its aspects towards us. An acquaintance with the wants of childhood ; a knowledge of the support and care which must be afforded it ; an experience of the anxiety which its sickness produces, and of the feelings consequent on the fatal issue of disease, are sources of instruction. The earthly parent is made to understand more fully the nature of his relation to the tender object of his regard, and thence may form a more complete image of the relation which the Infinite Parent sustains to him. He also perceives the character of the filial relation, in the dependence of his child upon him, and the obedience which he claims, and he may thus more clearly discern his own relation to the Father of the universe. The familiar saying, that our blessings are seldom justly appreciated until they are taken

from us, is true in this connexion. Parents are often taught the value of that happiness which proceeds from their domestic ties, and the strength of that affection which they bear to their offspring, by the sickness of a child, or its removal to another world. At such times, a mind disposed to receive advantage from trial will discover, in the intensity of its own feelings, an illustration of that love which we are justified, and even required by christianity, to believe our Creator cherishes for us. Under such teaching it is barely possible that piety should not acquire the character of child-like love and obedience. While the parent is enduring the anguish of declining hope or of bereavement, the child of God is learning to trust in Him with a filial submission, and to rejoice in his will.

E. S. G.

## **Consolations under the Deaths of Children.**

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I shall go to him ; but he shall not return to me.

II SAMUEL, 12, 13.

**PIETY** is the natural refuge of the sorrow-stricken and burdened spirit. Borne down by adversity, or oppressed with grief, we turn our steps to God's altars, and seek in the promises and hopes of religion that alleviation and support, which the world cannot yield.

We cannot reverse the decrees of heaven. We cannot recall those who are taken from us. While they yet live, we bend over them with a breathless solicitude. We watch each varying symptom with feverish anxiety. We eagerly cling to the last feeble remains of hope. We fast, and pray, and weep, for who can tell, our fond hearts urge, whether God will yet be gracious ; whether he will yet save. But it is too late. The last agony is over ; the bitterness of death is past ; the spirit has returned to him who gave it. Wherefore, then, should we weep ? Can

we bring lost ones back again ? Should we wish to recall them if we could ? Should we wish to take them from their heavenly reward, to restore them to earth, again to suffer, to weep, to renew their conflict with the world and with sin, and to undergo afresh the pangs of separation ? We shall go to them, but they shall not return to us. They have but crossed the flood a few days before us. We shall soon embark, and if we have been faithful and obedient, we shall go where our mutual knowledge will be renewed, and our earthly friendships revived, never more to be interrupted. Why then weep for the dead, who have but dropped their mortal habiliments, and have put on immortality ?

But they were early, it may be, summoned away. Their death, we think, was untimely, and therefore we grieve. We can bear to see the old pass away. The labors and enjoyments of life are ended ; their course is finished ; their race is run. It is fit that they should enter on their rest and reward. It is fit they should receive the crown of immortality. Their days are full, and they are gathered in, in their season. The remnant of life, were they spared, would be only

bitterness, for their strength is labor and sorrow. They sink on the couch of death, and we feel that it would be wrong to mourn.

But when the young die, the natural order of things seems reversed; our expectations are disappointed, and our feelings, in some sense, shocked. It is like the perishing of the buds and blossoms of spring, by which the hopes of the year are destroyed. Their days of usefulness, it may be, were but just commencing. They were just beginning to exert their capacities with success; their powers were not yet fully unfolded; they had not reached their full maturity and strength, when death intervened, and all their opportunities and projects, all the hopes which were centred in them, were suddenly ended. Hence sorrow fills the heart; hence dejection and anguish. They are untimely gone; gone in the freshness and promise of life's morning. Hence these tears.

There are considerations, however, which may serve to alleviate affliction occasioned by the death of the young. True, their hope of usefulness is blighted by early death; they are taken from the labors, the honors and enjoyments of life. But we should reflect

that they are also taken from its sufferings, its trials, its sorrows. As regards themselves, their removal may be a blessing ; we should trust that it is so. What is human life ? Too often a scene of feverish anxiety, of disappointment and anguish, a vanity, a sorrow. In how many forms may our peace and happiness be assailed ! How many are bowed down by sickness and misfortune ! How many consume their days and nights in wretchedness ; the victims of neglect, unkindness, and errors in others ! The young may be recalled, that they may be spared the sufferings and trials of earth. They may be taken from the evil to come. They have obtained their release, they have gone to their rest, ere sorrow had blighted their spirits. The tomb is a refuge into which care and grief can never intrude. There anguish cannot more rend the heart ; "no doubts bewilder, and no hopes betray." We would retain them, but God, who discerns the future, to us a dark abyss, has better things in reserve for them. He assigns them, in mercy, a short journey through the rough paths of earth, and takes them early to heavenly joys. Why then mourn for them as though some great evil had fallen on

them? What we deem their calamity is in fact their greatest felicity.

Again, we should reflect that life has not only its sorrows, but its temptations. It is a state of constant warfare with sin. We maintain an incessant conflict with inward and outward foes; and who can promise himself that he shall overcome? Who can answer for his own heart to the end? A thousand avenues conduct to the broad road of sin, and "easy is the descent," but the way to life is rugged and the path narrow. Those early summoned are taken from a field of danger, of toil, and wretchedness. Their character is now sealed; they are safe. Our apprehensions and solicitude for them are now past. Their spirits cannot now be dishonored by sin. If they have been faithful, and according to their ability and strength cultivated the christian affections, we have a right to regard them as transported to a seat in the paradise of God. They have gone to the Father; to the father of Jesus and of us; to his God and ours. Why mourn their translation? Why indulge the selfishness of grief?

A L.

## The Re-Unison of the Virtuous in a State of Happiness after Death.

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Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.

It is not from any vague or doubtful inferences that the christian derives his belief of a future world. His faith is more direct and steadfast. Christ has risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. The resurrection of our Lord, who was made in all things like unto his brethren, is an argument for man's immortality which, at the same time that it is more convincing than any which philosophy has urged, is so plain, that its force is immediately acknowledged by the humblest understanding.

My object at present, however, is not to consider the proofs of a future existence, but assuming the truth of the doctrine, as revealed in the gospel, to ascertain how far it may encourage us in a belief of a re-union with our departed friends in heaven. It is an inquiry of the deepest interest. The hopes

and fears, which it involves, are among the most powerful which can animate or distress the human bosom. The consolations, that it may afford, are among the highest and dearest which can be brought to Affliction, when she sits in the dust and weeps for those who are not. Let us then inquire whether, after death, we shall or shall not be forever united with each other.

Some, who perhaps have not duly considered this question, place it among those merely speculative ones, on which we can never hope, in this world, to obtain any satisfaction. Such are the questions:—Where is heaven to be? What will be the occupations there? What kind of bodies shall we have, precisely? On these particulars we may form our several theories, if we please, but there exist no real grounds for satisfactory conclusions. We must remain in ignorance; and it is of no great consequence that we should be informed. But the question, whether we shall rejoin and recognize hereafter those whom we knew and loved in this world, is of quite another character, of more interest and importance than those others, and admitting of a more easy and reasonable solution.

1. In support of this opinion, I will observe, in the first place, that the resurrection which is revealed in the gospel is a resurrection of individuals, as individuals; of each person in his distinct personality. Few will maintain that comfortless system of antiquity which teaches that the human soul is to be absorbed, after the death of the body, into the spirit of the universe. What satisfaction can it give us to know that we shall not be entirely lost in the great creation, if we are also to know, that we must resign all separate perceptions and pleasures, and never must think, feel or enjoy, as distinct existences?

It will be granted, therefore, that it is by no means a presumptuous or unwarranted, but a very simple thing to say, that we shall live hereafter as separate and distinct individuals, as truly so as we exist in the present life. And yet from this unpretending and almost self-evident postulate we may clearly deduce the doctrine, which some please to call a speculative one, of the re-union and recognition of friends in a future state.

If it is evident, that we are to exist as distinct individuals, it is equally evident, that we must know ourselves to be the same individuals who existed here. For if we are not

to be made certain of that, a resurrection will be equivalent to another creation; to the formation of a race of beings with whom we, who now live on the earth, can have nothing to do. That the belief of a future state may exert the least influence over our conduct, it is necessary that we should also believe that we shall be able to identify ourselves then, with ourselves as we are now; otherwise our belief will furnish no motive to virtue, nor any consolation in adversity.

It is further evident, that if we are to be conscious of our identity with our former selves, we must be conscious of the acts of our former existence; especially if we regard the future state as a state of retribution. For it is impossible to conceive how we can be the subjects of reward or punishment, without being sensible of what we had done or omitted on earth, to render us deserving of either. But if we are to be conscious of the acts of our former existence, if we are to remember our conduct while we were on the earth, we must likewise remember those among whom we had our conversation, those who in a great measure made our conduct what it was. Our duties, virtues, faults, sins and vices arise almost altogether from the

relations of society. We cannot remember the one without calling to mind the other. They are inseparably united, and the imagination cannot disjoin them. If I should remember that I had done a particular injury on earth, I must remember him whom I injured. If I should remember that I had performed a particular act of benevolence, I must remember the person whom I assisted. How much more should I remember, in the review of my life, those with whom I had been connected in the daily and most intimate intercourse of life; those who had exercised the most efficacious influences in the formation of my character; those who had called forth and gained and kept the best affections of my heart. The recollection of my former self and my former associates must be produced together, and from the same principle. If the one is evident, the other is so too.

We have now a direct inference of the mutual recollection of friends in a future state, from the christian doctrine of the resurrection of each individual to a distinct existence. And so well am I satisfied that the inference is rational and sound, that I

could hardly tell which of the two doctrines I most firmly believed

But the recollection of our friends, and a re-union with them, are not one and the same thing. There is still another step to be taken, from the one to the other. We may recollect our friends, and yet not be permitted to recognize or rejoin them. But is this probable? Can we for a moment suppose it? Will God disappoint our most cherished expectations? Will he condemn us to preserve in our memory the shadows of those we loved, while he denies to us their society and sympathy? Are we not only doomed to endure the pangs of separation from them here, but to know in the future world that when we left them here, we lost them for ever? The supposition is inconsistent with the goodness of our Creator, and should be dismissed as such. We shall not only remember but rejoin in the heavenly world the friends from whom we had been transiently separated by death.

2. There is another course yet more direct, if possible, than the above, which will bring us to the same conclusion. It involves no subtleties or minute discussions, and consists in the answer to as simple a question as

could well be asked. The question is this, Are we or are we not, in the world above, to live alone? Are we or are we not to lead, after death, an eternity of solitude? This is the only alternative. Each soul, in its glorified state, must either have a range entirely to itself, which shall never approach the sphere of any other soul, or it must associate with its kindred. It must exist in solitude, or in society. Let any one put this plain question to himself, and he cannot hesitate in giving his answer. He will perceive, that it is contrary to sound reason to imagine an eternal life of loneliness; and he will decide that the life of the blessed must be a life of society. And what society can it be, but that of friends? By whom shall we be surrounded but by our friends? With whom shall we live, if not with our friends? What beings will be more likely to partake with us the joys of heaven, than those who shared with us the joys and the sorrows of earth? What souls will be so probably associated with our own, as those to which our own had been endeared and assimilated by education, habit, intercourse, and time? Among the innumerable hosts of heaven, shall we be denied the sight of those whom of all others

we most wished to see? In the vast assembly of spirits, shall we search in vain for those whom we seek most eagerly? Will the only blank in creation be that which we are the most desirous to fill? Will the only wounds which are left unhealed be those which death had inflicted, and which we hoped that immortality would cure?—Our feelings, our reason, our common sense, will at once reply, that it cannot be so.

These rational conclusions will not be disturbed, but on the contrary confirmed, by scripture. Though it does not declare directly and fully that we shall know one another in a future state, it yet often implies that we shall, and never intimates that we shall not. Some of the passages which contain this presumptive evidence I will now bring together.

At the close of the earnest and affectionate intercession, which just before his crucifixion Christ offered up for his disciples, he introduces the following petition: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.” It is apparent from these words that our Saviour expected to meet in the glorious

state, which was to be the reward of his obedience and sufferings, both those who were then his disciples, and all who should become so afterwards. For in the address to his disciples, which precedes his prayer for them, he expresses himself quite as strongly. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." These words appear to me to be explicit; and we have only to take a short, an easy, I may say an unavoidable step, from the fact that the disciples of Christ are to be with him and one another, to arrive at the conclusion, that they will know him and one another. We may gather the same meaning and form the same conclusion from the following words of St. Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians: "Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you."

I would add, that heaven is never spoken of as a solitary, but often as a social place of existence. It is designated by words which imply society and intercourse and mutual

knowledge — such for instance as a city, a kingdom, a church, an assembly. We meet with an extraordinary number of these words, in a short and continuous passage of the epistle to the Hebrews, xii. 22. “ But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

Passages and expressions similar to these we shall often find in the holy volume. The least that can be said of them is, that they countenance an opinion which is prompted by affection and confirmed by reason. To my mind they complete the proof of a recognition and re-union of friends in the future state.

In endeavoring to maintain this belief, I cannot perceive that I have wandered into the region of mere speculation. It has been my object to make it appear a reasonable doctrine. For as reasonableness is a quality which, as far as I can judge of it, I never fail to require for every article of my own creed, so it is a rule by which I desire to see every

opinion examined and adopted, or rejected by others.

After discussing the grounds of the doctrine, we are at liberty to speak of its moral effects. No one will deny that these are of great importance. Its consolations are abundant. Like an angel of mercy, it hastens to the house which the angel of death has overshadowed; wipes away the tears of its inmates before time can arrive with its tardy comfort; and gives peace to the bosom when philosophy and stoicism have done their utmost in forcing composure on the features. It tells us, that those who were not permitted to accompany us to the end of our earthly journey, have only been taken before us to their resting-place, where we shall soon rejoin them. It will teach us to look on dissolution as only a longer or shorter term of temporary absence from those who have made life pleasant to us; as a suspension merely of those friendships and intimacies, which have afforded us the best part of what we have known as happiness; and we shall wait with a holy patience for a renewal of them, where they will never again be interrupted nor broken.

The influence of such a belief on the affec-

tions will naturally be extended to the conduct. It must be a purifying as well as a consolatory faith. The conviction that we shall meet our righteous friends in heaven, in the holy dwelling-place of God, if our own characters are such as will admit us to their company, will naturally make us anxious to amend and improve our lives, and separate ourselves from all defilement. We may expect that our union will then be immediate. But obstinate sin, we have every reason to believe, will prove a dreary banishment from the abodes of bliss, and from those who inhabit them. And it is my belief, that this separation of the wicked from the good will be one of the punishments of the former, and one of the inducements by which they will be moved to seek the forfeited favor of the Almighty, and a restoration to those friends from whom their evil deeds had estranged them.

I would observe in closing, that there are those on the earth whose days God has been pleased to prolong, till they have survived all that blessed their eyes or satisfied their affections, and till they have seen the dearest objects of their love fade away and fall around them, "like leaves in wintry weather." To

such, the doctrine of a speedy re-union must be something more than consolatory. It will prepare them to throw off life as an old and useless garment, and invite death as a redeeming friend.

If that high world, which lies beyond  
Our own, surviving love endears ;  
If there the cherished heart be fond,  
The eye the same, except in tears —  
How welcome those untrodden spheres !  
How sweet this very hour to die !  
To soar from earth, and find all fears  
Lost in thy light — Eternity !

F. W. P. G.

## **Christ's Legacy to His Disciples.**

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**Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you.**

A CALM and sacred peacefulness of mind is given to the devout and consistent christian, such as no worldly power can impart, and which no worldly power can destroy. Unlike the flashes of joy which kindle the countenance, and send the electric sparks of an excited spirit through the circles of the frivolous and gay, it is a peacefulness which dwells not on the surface, but an inward light; it burns clearly and brightly in the sanctuary of the soul. It is quenched not, dimmed not by the vicissitudes of life, and even when all earthly prospects are darkened and all earthly hopes destroyed, it points steadily to a bright and quiet and far-off spot, fast by the throne of God, where the weary will be at rest.

The christian derives peace from the conviction, that the events of life are ordered by a Providence which, though it inflict partial and temporary suffering, is administered for

universal and eternal good. He knows that nothing is too great to be above the care of his heavenly Father; nothing too small to be below it. He is assured that the gracious Being, who regards with compassion the sparrow that falls silently to the ground, and clothes the smallest field-flower with beauty and fragrance, while he wheels the planets in their orbits and restrains the sun in his place of light, will never forget the humblest individual whom he has created in his own image, and destined to immortality. He feels that the darkest events of Providence are appointed in love, and that the benevolent Father who pities his children, and knows that they are dust, sends no sorrow without a kind design.

This is indeed a hard lesson to learn. It is taught thoroughly in the school of Christ alone, that the discipline of suffering is as truly a part of the order of Providence, and as strong a proof of the love of God, as the blessings of prosperity. You may acknowledge the benevolence of the Deity, and be able to feel it in the loveliness of a summer's landscape, where the blue heavens and the bright waters and the green earth are mingled in a common expression of beauty, and

the magnificent drapery of nature is all unfolded by a divine hand ; but do you not know, that the blighting frosts and chilling snows, the gloom and desolation of winter, are appointed by the same Almighty author, and that he who causes the gentle showers which refresh the thirsty earth, rides forth in the whirlwind, and directs the tempest ? Does he send the one in love and the other in anger ? Is not the God of the summer and the God of the winter the same ? Are not his tender mercies over all his works ? Do you not see him in the red lightning and the angry storm, as well as in the blue sky and tranquil heavens ? Does the long resounding thunder, which inflicts evil upon a part for the benefit of the whole, speak less distinctly the praises of Jehovah, than the gentle music of the wind, as it dies peacefully away over the echoing hills ?

And as natural evil and natural good are thus blended in just proportion for the benefit of man, the christian perceives that the trials of life and the blessings of life are from the same wise Providence, and that adversity has its sweet and sacred uses, as well as prosperity. In sickness as well as in health ; in sorrow as well as in joy ; in the event which

prostrates his hopes, as well as in that which elevates them, he recognizes the will of the same God. What ! he devoutly exclaims, what ! shall I receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall I not also receive evil ? The Lord gave, the same Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord. Blessed, when he gives, and when he takes away.

The christian, moreover, derives peace from the assurance, that as all the allotments of Providence come from a father, and are sent in love, so they may all contribute to the ultimate welfare of his soul. The gospel teaches us not only that it *is* good for us to be afflicted, but it explains *how* it is good for us to be afflicted. It informs us that the great object of life is the cultivation of our moral being. It informs us, that though outward blessings are taken from us, if the inward virtues are increased, our highest good is not injured, but on the contrary augmented. Now we know, by our observation of the human mind, that certain traits of character are not fully developed in the sunshine of prosperity, but are nurtured and flourish and grow up amid the storms of adversity. Many a beautiful plant is brought to perfection, many a precious fruit is ripened, not so much

by the hot sun of noon, as by the refreshing moisture of midnight. So many a beautiful and precious virtue of the soul is best cherished in silence and solitude, when all things bright and fair have vanished, and darkness broods around.

There is thus in the eternal plan of Providence a principle of compensation, by which sorrow is turned into joy, and present troubles produce lasting benefits. The light affliction, which is but for a moment, works out for the subdued and improved sufferer a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. No matter in what form the trial comes; no matter what stern disguise it may assume; it is sent for the best good of man. It is borne from the throne of the Almighty, not by a demon of wrath, but by an angel of mercy. The cup of trembling which he presents, though it contain the waters of bitterness, is filled from the fountain of life.

In feelings and hopes like these does the christian find peace. Thus is fulfilled that blessed promise of our Lord, " Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you."

## Fragments.

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For what was call'd  
Affliction, brought an evidence of love.  
It came disguis'd in Sorrow's livery,  
But it threw off her borrow'd garb, and lo !  
The white rob'd Angel of celestial love  
With her sweet influence was there. She still'd  
His troubled thoughts, open'd his blinded heart,  
And led him out beyond the changing earth,  
And pointed up to the Eternal mind,  
That taketh knowledge of a sparrow's fall,  
And lights a world with glory ; that will hear  
A sigh's low music mid the swelling praise,  
Which rushes upward from a thousand realms.

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Light came from darkness, gladness from despair :  
As, when the sun-light fadeth from the earth,  
Star after star comes out upon the sky,  
And shining worlds, that had not been reveal'd,  
In day's full light, are then made manifest :  
'T was so with him.— The light of earth shut out,  
His thoughts turn'd inward, and discover'd there  
Things of immortal wonder, living springs  
Of an unfailing comfort ; hidden things,  
Brighter than earth's allurements. He could trace  
The operations of the immortal mind,  
On its high path to excellence and joy,  
And see the prize of its high calling there.

## Fragments.

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— She too, the fair young creature by my side,  
All gay with hope, all buoyant with delight ;  
Will aught of evil leave its traces there ?  
That voice, which breathes such music to the ear,  
Oh, will it lose the rapture of its song ?  
Flower of life's desert ! Must a shade too fall  
On the young freshness of thy op'ning morn ?  
Oh ! if a prayer can win the ear of Heav'n,  
By the soul's strength that sends it, this shall be heard —  
That never grief may cloud that radiant brow,  
Or send a tear, where smiles are resting now.

— Why should such thoughts come o'er me ? Why,  
When all is bright and happy, should a gloom  
Be spread around us ? Oh ! blind and thoughtless soul !  
'T is the same pow'r that reigns, and the same love  
Is trac'd alike in sun-shine and in shade ;  
The cloud that bears the thunder in its folds  
Comes on the errand of "good will to man."  
Oh ! we should cling too close to earth, and love  
Too well its pleasures and delights,  
Were there no shadows on its scenes of light,  
No sorrow mingled with its cup of joy.  
If sweet fulfilment follow'd all our hopes  
Like the unfoldings of a spring-flower bud,  
We should not seek a better world than this ;  
Where then would be the reachings of the soul  
For higher pleasures, and those purer joys  
That have no other dwelling-place but heaven ?

## **Correspondence.**

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**Extract of a letter from \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*, to a sister, after a severe  
bereavement.**

Jan. 10, 1830,

**MY DEAR C.**

I TRUST you have not ascribed it to any want of feeling or interest, that I have not said more to you in relation to that painful bereavement, which Providence has so mysteriously appointed you. I cannot say what I would in words. Would to Heaven I had power to say any thing to assuage that grief which, with the highest principles and the noblest view, must be poignant indeed. The greatness of this trial no one can fully know, that has not tested it. But I know enough to awaken all my sympathy. It is a poor gift; but if it will yield you any consolation, you may draw largely from this source.

But there are higher sources of consolation; sources of whose freeness and fulness we need not the assurance of man. On this subject man may well confess his inability to

speak. He need not speak, for God and Jesus have spoken, and he can add nothing : we rejoice that he can take away nothing from what is written on the sacred page. It has always seemed to me one of the highest beauties and blessings of our religion, that it is so full of clear, unequivocal, delightful assurances for our support and solace in the loss of children. There is a mildness and clearness in its language on this subject—I mean the purity and consequent happiness of the departed child—and at the same time a certainty and power, which we do not find in other connexions, and which the heart must be dead to resist. Christianity appears to yearn towards the young with a mother's tenderness and love ; and when they are taken away, it seems but another visible scene of their Saviour taking them to his arms, blessing them, and saying : “ Of such is my kingdom,” “ forbid them not to come to me.” And after the first irrepressible burst of sorrow, why can we not as truly rejoice that they are taken to those arms and that kingdom in heaven, as we should have rejoiced to have seen them thus embraced and blessed on earth ? They are of a higher kingdom. They belong to a purer realm. And is it wrong in

us, or is it nothing, to find consolation in the thought that we have contributed to the purity and joy of that realm, by relinquishing a portion of our own present happiness? Can we refuse, can we hesitate for a moment to press the uncertain, and at best very transient gratification of a life prolonged to us, when we know that by this sacrifice we purchase for the little loved one a deliverance from all possible evil, and a sure admission to eternal bliss?

In all common cases of affliction there is, there must be consolation flowing in upon every good mind, from such thoughts as these. And I ask, is this consolation less, less abundant or less sure, because your's is not a common case? Will you permit the peculiar circumstances of your trial to weigh upon your spirit, and prevent you from deriving that support and solace which you would otherwise obtain? In my view, the very peculiarities of your case, while they must for the time aggravate your distress, when rightly considered, may and will have the opposite effect. For they are most plainly the direct appointment of God. There is a providence in them, above our knowledge and control. They point us strongly to the irresistible

power, the absolute dominion of God over his creatures. They make us feel, what we are apt only to say, that we are not our own, but His, our bodies and our spirits, ourselves and our children, our all : and they teach us how wretched and helpless would be our condition if it were not so. In a word, such events force upon us the whole and great truth of our nearness to God ; and make us see that it is not only the dictate of religion, but the part of wisdom, to yield every thing to him. "Do with us what seemeth to thee good."

H.

## **Correspondence.**

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**Extract from a letter written by a father to his daughter, while she was absent on a journey, after the death of a lovely boy.**

**Aug. 28.**

**MY DEAR CHILD :**

I RECEIVED last evening your husband's letter of the 23d instant, and was glad you had got thus far on your journey; and that your trouble on your way was less than you expected. My fond wishes attend you, that all the evils of life may thus disappoint you, as I am sure our happiness in the next, if we conduct well in this, will exceed our most unbounded expectations.

Though these small occurrences gave me pleasure, it would have been very greatly increased, had he informed me your spirits revived, and the beauties of Nature had called forth a more cheerful enjoyment of the sweets that surround you. I did hope and I yet hope, they will have that happy effect before you return, or I should not have advised to the jaunt, but should rather wished you to stay at home, that I might have mourned

with you the separation of the moment, not the loss, of your darling boy. I know the luxury of woe has many charms for the feeling mind, and I believe when it is enjoyed in reason, it seems to soften and compose. The luxuries of life, if only now and then enjoyed, are undoubtedly desirable, and perhaps innocent; but when indulged intemperately, we all know the pleasure soon cloys, and the most fatal consequences ensue. So the superior luxury which proceeds from virtuous grief, when separated by the grave from those we love, if indulged to excess, preys upon the spirits, destroys our usefulness in life, undermines the vital principle, and conveys us to the grave, to rest with our friends there. But this entirely frustrates the designs of a merciful God, who sends afflictions that we may know how to conduct in life, not to force us out of it; that we may see the insufficiency of every thing here below to produce real happiness, and to wean us from sublunary things; that we may be prepared for that substantial happiness, which awaits the virtuous in a better world. And to desert our post because difficulties attend us; and to refuse the comforts offered us on our journey because they are not equal to the elegancies we have at home, would be condemn-

ed by every thinking person. It is easier to advise than to practice; but I nevertheless do not expect you will retort upon me. My judgment tells me it is right to submit implicitly to whatever our Almighty friend sees fit to bring us in life. He is our friend, and most assuredly orders the occurrences of our life for our best good; and although now we see it not, yet at the last it will most fully appear. If therefore we cannot now see, let us learn to believe and trust. Trust whom? Not an Almighty, inflexible Being, who from eternity appoints his creatures to misery. Such a Being all might fear, but none could love! No: a Being whose goodness is every where displayed; "who willeth not the death of a sinner," nor unnecessary distress to any of his creatures, for his tender mercies are over all his works. The lovely babe we deplore has, by submitting to death, paid all that was demanded for the transgression of our first parents, and having none of his own to account for, was, through the mercy of our Saviour, received to a share in his glory, and is now singing hosannas with our blessed friends in heaven.

I hope you will not disappoint my expectations; that you will recall that cheerful deportment which rendered you agreeable to

all your friends. Remember you have a tender husband, who justly loves you, and mourns with you; a darling child still remaining; a father, much of whose hope of comfort in life leans upon you; and many friends, who esteem and love and draw much of their comfort from you. These, to whose happiness you can so essentially contribute, demand your attention. But to the cherub, if your indulgence of grief can have any effect, it must be to lessen his happiness! And if to give is more blessed than to receive, it certainly is more blessed to give than to take away from the happiness of any one.

The power of benevolence you have not lost; and there are more avenues from that source than the bare bestowment of money. To give comfort and happiness to your friends and connexions, by enjoying it yourself, may justly be placed to that account. I entreat you, therefore, to exert yourself, and disappoint me not in this my wish and just expectation. I could write a volume, were it necessary, on the excellent lesson conveyed in the beautiful fable of the 'Hermit,' but you know it already; and if you have not before, I hope you will now indulge reflections on it something like those; for they will serve to

reconcile you to the doings of that God who cannot do wrong. Remember, to enjoy is to obey; but to reject the blessings offered may be the means of their being withheld. And although those justly-beloved comforts may be hidden from us for a moment, if we submit without repining, and enjoy those that remain with gratitude to the benevolent Giver, the time will come when they shall be brought again to our view and society, beautiful as angels, and the enjoyment of them shall be durable as eternity.

I have to inform you of the death of professor T\*\*\*\*\*\*, which took place yesterday morning. He was a worthy man, and is now gone to receive his reward. I expect you will write soon, yourself; and let me see, by the contents, that though the mother and the friend may feel, yet the christian can suffer with resignation, fortitude and hope; and that your aspirations after heaven, and the desire of possessing it, are increased by every deprivation you are called to suffer on earth; knowing they are appointed by your Father in heaven, who loves you more than your truly affectionate father on earth. J. B\*\*\*\*\*.

### **Reflections on visiting the Grave of a Child.**

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In the spring of the last year I attended the funeral of a child; one that I had often seen the parents gaze upon with an expression of deep delight, and seemingly without the least consciousness that it was not an immortal thing. I could understand their happiness, but not their security: for I had shared that calamity, from which life is not free, and with a heavy but I trust an humble heart, had laid my treasure in the dust. I was prepared therefore to sympathize with them, "tear for tear." But in truth, the heart most acquainted with grief must have been moved at the sight of a child, beautiful as the morning star, called away from his parents' care and tenderness, and soon to lay his head on a colder pillow than his mother's breast. The scene was impressive, even awful; the stillness of the mansion which had wrung with his laugh of gladness; the parents wrapt in unutterable wo; the children gazing with wonder and awe on the

mystery of death ; and old men, each pondering as he leaned on his staff, why so lovely a form should be created only, as it seemed, to be dashed in pieces ; all was silence, thoughtfulness, and death. In the midst of them lay the child, once so tender and helpless, now insensible to all human affections. His features bore that unsearchable depth of expression which no mortal eye could read ; there was a smile on his lips, and a clear radiance on his brow, that made all who beheld it feel the unapproachable majesty of death. Soon the melancholy bell, the returning procession, and the tomb closing on its creaking hinges, told me that he had passed the boundary that separated the living from the dead.

In the autumn, I happened to visit the burial-place. This is a favorite retreat of the thoughtful ; it has a solitude of its own, neither dreary nor oppressive ; a holy and gentle stillness, which is felt by every one that passes by. It was in a season of the day and year auspicious to such influences ; the red leaves were just beginning to wither and fall ; the breathing of Nature was like a universal sigh ; the evening clouds were hurrying to the west, to float once more in the sunset radiance ; and all was still, as the

decay that wears the marble of the tombs. The pale monuments rose around me, telling of the dead, not so much what they were, as what they ought to have been. But I was less moved by all their legends of vanity or affection, than by one small stone, which hardly rose above its bed of green. It was the memorial of that child who perished in the infancy and innocence of existence; leaving no more traces of himself among the living, than the cloud that wanders and melts away in the blue of heaven.

I could not help meditating on the effect of time. At the time when the leaves which I saw falling around me were opening, this child was in the brightness of its rising. Now, it was gathered, "dust to dust;" then, it was taken from the living, and the parents refused all comfort, both of God and man. Now, most of those who shed tears for his early departure had forgotten where they had laid him; and the parents themselves treasured his memory with far more tenderness than gloom. Had they not the same consolations then? Had any visible angel, since, said to them that he was not here, but had risen? Was not the Sun of righteousness shining as brilliantly then upon the world

as now? I felt that time had done what religion then could not do: what religion might then have done, had it been intimate in the heart. For it was designed to remove the terrors of the grave; and instead of throwing ourselves open to the accidents and misfortunes of life, we should take the consolation God has offered, and bind it to our souls. We should not allow ourselves to be entirely passive in the day of trial. We should exert all the energy of our nature, touched and quickened by religion. If our hearts are strung to the trials of life, like the fine instrument, their tones will be inspiring; but give them up to the influences of the world, and they are all sadness, like the harp of the winds, on which the passing breeze makes what melody it will.

And yet it would seem as if the anguish of sorrow was almost as deep, as if our religion never had come. The tears flow as fast and freely as they did two thousand years ago; but then immortality was like some star which shone unregarded in the heaven. Now, its periods have been measured: its vastness revealed; and it has been made a guide to wanderers on the sea. Still we regard the future with uneasiness and dread;

we set our affections on perishing things, and are miserable when we lose them. When our friends are living and happy, we feel as if they were immortal ; when they are gone, we mourn for them as if they were lost for ever.

I saw the book of Nature spread open before me, as I stood in this place of death ; and it seemed as if I could read better things on its illuminated page. It is a revelation of God, like christianity. If our Saviour told his disciples to gather instruction from the lowly flowers, there must be something taught in the grand and beautiful works of God. I cannot believe that the sun and moon have shone six thousand years merely to enlighten the world ; or that the planets wheel through their bewildering paths only to gladden the eye with their beauty. These things have a holier purpose, a religious design. We see that not a leaf fades till the purpose of its existence is fulfilled ; and then we learn that the infant cannot perish, though in the sight of men it seems to die. " He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him ; even length of days for ever and ever." All this is more than confirmed by christianity ; and religion hardly acknowledges such a thing as death ; for there is no such thing as death to the

soul. The change which bears the name of death cannot deprive it of one of its affections or its powers; and if any human spirits are prepared to enter the heavenly mansions, they must be those that have left this world in the day-break of their existence, before they have been darkened by calamity or profaned by sin. The time which is best for beginning their immortal improvement is the time to die; and if we had the power, who would dare withhold them from their Father and our Father, from their God and our God?

I left that place with a conviction which I hope will never fail me; a conviction that death is not the momentous change we imagine. It is neither the close of life nor the beginning of immortal existence. The change which makes man religious should date the time when the "corruptible puts on incorruption, and the mortal, immortality." The first heralds of our faith, the most intrepid men the world ever saw, regarded death with comparative indifference; they looked upon it, not as a time when they should be altered in their destiny, character or feeling; it was simply a dissolution of the form; a release from the body whose infirmities had so often weighed down the soul.

The heaven of the blest begins when they begin to feel the peace which religion gives ; death will only place them where the shadows of earth shall no longer surround them ; they will go on in the same path which they trod below ; or rather in the same direction, for they shall ascend with 'wings as eagles,' and go on rejoicing in their glorious flight through the boundless heaven.

Oh ! that we understood this ! Then the relation of parents and of children would be far more endearing and exalted. They who give their children life are to give them immortality. When they teach them to add the beauty of holiness to the beauty of childhood and of youth ; when they impress religion on their souls by the eloquence of the simple story or the music of the plaintive hymn ; when they show them how to gather the harvest of peace and happiness which forms the heaven of the blest, they are making them immortal. To them, there shall be no more death. The grave shall not be an interruption in that never-ending way, in which they pass from glory to glory on either side the grave. And they who are taken before their promise is unfolded, when their smiles are bright with an intelligence which

only a parent's eye can read, do not taste of death; they are translated, like the early friend of God.

Let those who are weeping for their children remember this, and be comforted. That loved one is with Him, who suffered children to come to him when he lived below. It is with the spirits of the just. Had it lived, it might have been happy; but now there is no uncertainty. It lives where it must be happy. The gentle star is not quenched so soon as they imagine. They see it no longer, because it is lost in the deeper brightness of the sky.

W. B. O. P.

## The Christian's Solace under the Loss of Virtuous Friends.

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For I would not have you ignorant concerning them, which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others that have no hope.

A BEAUTIFUL feature, by which the spirit of our religion is distinguished from that of mere philosophy is, that while the latter forbids the indulgence of the natural emotions of sorrow, the former presents specific sources of relief. The philosopher would say that it is unwise and unmanly to mourn, since our grief cannot change the course of events. The christian gives way to the feelings of nature, which prompt the bursting tear and sad regret; but at the same time, his sorrow is not without hope. The philosopher would bow to the stern necessity of fate, without a struggle; the christian submits his overflowing heart to the gracious will of God.

The christian has no faith in that unfeeling stoicism, which can part, unmoved, with the cherished and the beloved: but if his soul is overwhelmed within him, he knows where to

look for deliverance. Perhaps the truly devout and religious man feels more keenly than others the separation of those ties, which bind him to his friends ; for the spirit of piety is one of sensibility ; and he who is most susceptible to the influences of religion may receive most deeply the impressions of grief. He is alive, moreover, to many associations that are not regarded by the thoughtless, which make the heart more delicate and yielding, so that the event which passes lightly over others, sinks into his soul. But if he is more exposed to the influence of sorrow, he has also deeper fountains of consolation. God giveth not as the world giveth, and while he touches the heart with the rod of affliction, he imparts strength to sustain the blow.

The sorrow, which arises from the loss of friends, is alleviated with peculiar tenderness by the promises of the gospel. In how different a light does death appear to the christian, and to him who is without hope ! Before life and immortality were brought to light by Jesus Christ, death was emphatically the king of terrors. When the domestic hearth was invaded by his approach, and a loved one snatched away, the survivors could only mourn over his vacant place, but they knew not

whither he was gone. They might consume his remains on the funeral pile, but while the mingling flames pointed to heaven, they could perceive no emblem of the spirit which had gone upward. They might gather his ashes in an urn ; and in those frail relics they saw all that was left of the friend who had rejoiced with them in the intercourse of life. Their wise men indeed had reasoned, and their poets had sung of the Elysian fields where the brave and the renowned were happy ; but it was a happiness which excited no distinct hopes and offered no real consolation. It seemed more like a mysterious dream of fancy than a definite object of faith. It was a beautiful subject of speculation ; but it took no hold of the heart. No light from the spiritual world had visited their eyes ; no glad tidings of salvation had been announced to their ears ; no assurance of a conscious immortality had blessed their souls. They sorrowed as those without hope.

Far different are the views with which the christian regards those who, in the pathetic language of inspiration, " are asleep in Jesus." He looks upon death, not as the termination of their existence, but as the entrance to a higher state of being. His hopes are not

buried in the grave, to which he commits the remains of mortality, but they follow the spirit, which hath cast off its fleshly garments, to abodes of life and light, which are none the less real because they are invisible. Though he leaves the body of the friend, who was dear to him, in the dark and narrow house appointed for all living, he does not sorrow as those who have no hope; for he believes that as the dust returns to the dust as it was, the spirit has returned to God who gave it.

The christian regards those who have slept in Jesus as still objects of remembrance and affection. There is a union between heaven and earth. The angels in heaven were once mortals on earth; and mortals on earth are to become as angels in heaven. They are both members of a spiritual society, in which a spiritual and blessed fellowship exists. This unites the relations of the future world with those of the present. It connects the living with the dead. It embraces in one spiritual family the loved whom we have lost, and the loved who remain. They who have gone from us still live in our memory; and our spirits communue with theirs in the fellowship of love. Though we shall see their faces no

more in the flesh, the record of their virtues is engraved upon our hearts; and the hope that we shall again be united with them takes away the bitterness of grief from the recollection of the past. While we indulge this hope, it is without pain that officious memory paints before us the joys and sorrows of other days, till the experience of years seems crowded into a moment. We do not refuse to dwell upon the events and scenes that we have enjoyed or suffered together; which, though faded from the mind, are now revived in their original freshness by the approach of death, just as his touch often imparts to the worn and altered features of age the expression of their youth.

It was said, that we are again to be united with those who have slept in Jesus. This hope is an important circumstance, in which the sorrow of the christian differs from the sorrow of him who is destitute of the gospel. If there is a prospect of again beholding our departed friends, how much is the pain of separation mitigated! The parting of the loved is then the parting of a friend, who goes before us on a journey which we are soon to commence, and at the end of which we shall meet. But may we cherish this delightful

hope as an alleviation of our sorrow? Do we not deceive ourselves by believing what we wish to be true? On a subject so obscure as the peculiar nature of the future life, well does it become a creature of the dust to be modest and humble. But if our light is feeble and faint, we ought not to close our eyes on that which we may obtain; and to the devout inquirer it will probably appear, that the voice of scripture unites with that of reason, to declare that the good who have loved each other on earth will renew their friendship in heaven. How constantly did Paul speak of meeting with the objects of his apostolic care and affection, in the day which he looked for to consummate his hopes! "For what," asks he, "is our hope and joy, and crown of rejoicing? Are not ye, in the day of the Lord Jesus?" In the midst of his labors he is comforted by the faith that they who have been saved by his preaching will appear with him, as his joy and crown, at the coming of the Lord.

We are told, moreover, that the blessed in heaven are united in ascribing honor and thanksgiving to the Saviour, who loved them and died for them. Absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. And if pre-

sent together with him, must they not be united with each other? Do not the innumerable company of angels, the multitude which no man can number, before the throne, form the general assembly and church of the redeemed, in which they who were united in the bonds of virtuous friendship on earth are united in everlasting love in heaven?

Does not reason also permit us to indulge the pleasing hope of renewing hereafter the holy attachments which death has interrupted? Are we not the same in character, feeling, and affection, beyond the grave, that we are now? Do not the same arguments, which authorize us to hope for a conscious existence of progressive virtue, lead us also to hope that the friends whom we have loved will advance with us? Is it an objection, that great diversities of excellence and knowledge may prevent a perfect sympathy in the minds of those who are re-united after a temporary separation? But if sympathy were incompatible with superiority, who could hope for communion with the son of God? And it may be no baseless vision, that the blessed, who have gone before, take delight to instruct those who shall come after; and that our minds will receive a holy influence from those

purified spirits who have preceded us into the regions of eternal day. We may learn the mysteries of the universe and of God, from those with whom we have here taken sweet counsel ; and who have opened their eyes on the light of eternity, while we are left to wander among the shadows of time.

With such a faith, we need not be ignorant concerning those who are asleep. We need not sorrow, as those who have no hope. Death is no longer the king of terrors, with authority to execute the sentence, " Dust thou art, and unto dust thou must return ; " but a messenger of peace, to bear the souls of the righteous to the presence of God.

G. R.

## **Jesus Christ, the true Source of Consolation.**

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**Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.**

THE scene in which we live is one of perpetual change and disappointment. The morning sun rises bright and beautiful, and we promise ourselves a fair and a happy day. But before noon the horizon is overcast with clouds ; and when we look to the west for the gorgeous pictures that are wont to be painted on the evening sky, we find that the heavens are veiled in darkness and in gloom. We have enjoyed it may be a long period of prosperity. The blessings of Providence have descended upon us in an uninterrupted and unmixed stream. Our plans have all been prospered. Our adventurous enterprises have all succeeded. Our hopes, our desires, our vainest wishes, have all been gratified. Health, and ease, and tranquillity, have been the constant inmates of our dwellings ; and the glad voices of contentment and joy have responded to each other from every side. Our

friends have been about us, and our family has been a blessed society, bound together by the ties of natural affection and mutual esteem. For years, all things have gone well with us. We have floated down the stream of time on a current so placid and noiseless, that we have been insensible even to our progress. We have admired the pleasant scenery about us, and caught a glimpse of a still fairer prospect beyond it, and have settled down in the quiet luxury of unmixed bliss.

On a sudden, a change comes over this happy scene. Affliction, sickness, bereavement, take up their abode in our dwelling. In the affecting language of scripture, "beauty is changed into ashes, the oil of joy into mourning, and the garment of praise into the spirit of heaviness." God changeth the countenances of friends and relatives, and sendeth them away. A venerated parent, whose head was silvered by the frosts of many winters, is removed from the sight of the children, whom she led up along the paths of infancy and childhood with a mother's tenderness, and whom she guided and counselled, in their maturer years, with a mother's instinctive wisdom. A husband is snatched away from the bosom of his family — his wife is a widow

and his children are fatherless. Parents are called to mourn the early departure of a child who, by its innocence and young affection, had twined itself about their hearts, and whose dissolution was felt like the dismembering of their own frame. One after another we are all called to drink of the bitter cup of bereavement, and to resign those respected and beloved ones, in whom we had treasured up our hopes. There is no exemption from this common lot of humanity. The tears that we once shed with such a true and ready sympathy for the sorrows of others, at last fall warm and frequent for our own. Observation is now turned into experience, and we feel that we never knew before the anguish of a bereaved heart.

Such being the universal and inevitable lot, mankind have been led in every age to look around them for support and comfort. They called upon Nature, and besought her, by her marvellous and mysterious agency, to give them knowledge and relief. But Nature, though she every where displays the marks of a designing mind and a contriving hand, could not tell why the wheels of life stood still, or whether they would ever again be put in motion. They looked up to the heavens, and conjured the stars, that never faint in

their watches, to send down their benign influences, to impart light to the benighted mind and peace to the troubled heart. But the bright orbs above, though they move on as if they were animated and guided by an angel's power, were deaf to the cry of their worshippers, and could afford them no intelligence concerning the spirit that once tenanted that cold and lifeless form. They applied to the oracles of wisdom and to the sages of a lettered age for succor and consolation. But the responses of Philosophy were as chill and cheerless as the marble forehead that lay before them. The best consolations that she had to offer were, that separation and bereavement were inevitable ; that tears and lamentations were unavailing ; that there could be no remedy nor relief ; and that therefore it was wrong and impious to grieve. How cold and comfortless must these suggestions have appeared to the mourner, as he bent over the lifeless remains of his friend ! Well might the Roman emperor say, when these vain comforts were administered to him, that so far from soothing they served only to aggravate his grief.

We have seen how ineffectual and unsatisfactory are the consolations of nature, of reason, and of human wisdom. We have

drank of their waters, but have found that we have not drawn from the wells of peace and salvation. To whom then shall we go? With the enthusiastic confidence of Peter we may exclaim, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Yes, in our moments of lonely sorrow we must leave our earthly supports, and have recourse to an heavenly comforter. We must listen to the teachings of Jesus, to the gracious and soothing words of him who spake as never man spake, and we shall find rest and peace to our souls. We shall attest the efficacy and recognize the value of the christian faith, and find by happy experience that "consolation aboundeth by Christ."

Let the mourner open the New Testament, and turn to the simple and affecting narrative of the resurrection of Lazarus. His sickness, the anxiety of his sisters and their grief at his death, are portrayed with such minuteness of detail, and with such exact conformity to truth and nature, that we almost feel ourselves transported through the interval of ages to the little village of Bethany. We are present at the solemn parting scene. We weep with the mourners. We mingle with the sad group who follow the departed to his dark resting-place, and we see the stone rolled upon

the mouth of the sepulchre.—And now is there one of that concourse who stand around the tomb, into whose mind the thought has ever entered, that that body, which he had seen folded in the garments of death and deposited among the relics of mortality, shall again be instinct with life and motion? Let him come but a few days hence, and he will see gathered around the spot another multitude. They have not come merely to weep there; for curiosity, and expectation, and an undefined hope, may be traced in their anxious countenances. There is one among them who was not present at the interment. The deep emotion which he is unable to suppress indicates that he was a friend of the departed; and the intent gaze with which all eyes regard him, justifies the suspicion that he is something more than an ordinary personage. The authority with which he speaks, “Take ye away the stone,” raises still higher the expectation of the crowd. Why should he wish to behold the features of him who has been dead four days already? He does not wish to behold them. It is not an idle curiosity, nor even the call of friendship, which has summoned him hither, and now governs his conduct. It is to manifest the power of God, that he stands by that opened tomb, and

after lifting his eyes, and breathing his prayer to heaven, cries, "Lazarus come forth!" And behold! he that was dead comes forth. The powers of nature resume their accustomed functions. The current of life rushes once more through his veins. The pale visage is suffused with the bloom of recovered existence. The eyelid is raised; and instead of that dim and heavy ball which it before concealed, the bright index of intelligence beams full upon you. The rigid muscles relax; the stiff limbs become pliant; and the reanimated man moves forward to salute his astonished friends!

By the resurrection of Lazarus, the declarations of the Saviour are fulfilled, and the hopes of the believer are confirmed. Faith is changed into reality. We know, that the mysterious change through which we pass at death does not affect the intellectual and spiritual part of our nature. We feel confident that Jesus hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. We are cheered in the time of bereavement, and supported in the hour of dissolution, by his blessed assurance, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

A. Y.

## The Improvement to be derived from Examples of sudden Death.\*

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As for man, his days are as grass. As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

RELIGION directs our attention to death, not that we may be depressed and subdued by its terrors, but that we may triumph over them; that we may learn to anticipate the grave with calmness, and may descend into it with hope, and even joy. Religion calls us to think of death, because, though at first alarming, it has a healing virtue, and purifies and elevates the mind in which it dwells. Fear not then to converse with the tomb. To that solemn region we are all hastening; and whilst our minds are unclouded by disease, whilst reflection can avail us, let us ap-

\* These extracts the compiler has been permitted to select from the manuscript of a distinguished clergyman, which had incidentally come into his hands. They are taken from a discourse delivered on a Sabbath following the sudden death of a valued friend and parishioner, and of a useful citizen; the interesting circumstances of which are improved with the feeling and eloquence they were suited to inspire.

proach it and hear the voice of wisdom which issues from its recesses.

The scriptures labor, if I may so speak, to give us deep impressions of the brief and uncertain duration of human life. On no subject are stronger, more touching, more awakening illustrations employed. How very striking and affecting the metaphor of the text: "As for man, his days are as grass." Man is compared to a feeble blade in the field, which bends with every wind; which is now swept away by the storm; now trodden under foot by the traveller; now cut down in a moment by the husbandman; now assailed at the root by the secret worm; and now withered by blasts too subtile for the eye to discern. But man is not only compared to the grass. "As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth." Here he is likened to the flower — the frailest and most perishable production of vegetable nature; which opens its bosom to the morning light, and delights us by its fragrance and beauty; but at night we see it shrivelled and perished; its head drooping; its bright hues faded; and its leaves fallen to the earth or scattered through the air. 'The scorching or chilling wind has passed over it, and it is gone; and the place

that knew it will know it no more. In the scriptures we find other illustrations, equally striking, of the vanity of human life. And I need not repeat to you the evidences which such passages derive from experience. On this point, all ages and nations bear concurrent testimony. Generation after generation, in unbroken succession, have descended to the tomb, and swelled the proofs of human frailty. Every object we see has some association with death. We are surrounded on every side with the labors of the dead. Our possessions, our institutions, our language and religion, have descended to us from the dead. Multitudes whom we have known, many beloved friends, have gone to join the dead. Every day erects a new trophy to the powers of the grave; every day speaks to us of mortality.

But among the multiplied proofs of our frailty, none are so striking as the examples of sudden death which we are occasionally called to witness; and by which a wise, and I will add a benevolent providence intends to rouse an unreflecting world. In protracted disease, man seems to struggle, with a temporary success, against the last foe; and though he falls, yet his protracted defeat, his

endurance of the painful conflict, lead us to speak of the power of life. But when arrested in the midst of an active career; when cut down in the moment of vigor and hope; when levelled by a single blow to the earth, how impotent, how frail does man appear! In sudden death, the display of human frailty is almost too powerful for our faculties. We can hardly believe that life has so suddenly fled; that the transition from health to the tomb has been so awfully short. As we look on the motionless body, over which death has obtained this dreadful triumph, we cannot separate from it the active power and sensibility which, but a moment past, it possessed. The breast still seems to heave; the lip seems ready to speak, and assure us that the report of death is a delusion. We cannot realize that a friend is so soon gone. But time brings home the truth to our hearts, and unless we are insensible, a solemn feeling of our own frailty takes possession of our minds.

On the last Sunday, I spoke of the possibility of sudden death. I observed, that we have not the promise even of an hour; that at night, when we sink into sleep, that image of death, we have no pledge that we shall awake again on the earth. Little did I im-

agine, that these truths were to receive in a few hours a most solemn verification. Little did I think, that one who heard, one whose health was as firm and whose hopes of life as ardent as my own, was, before another morning, to receive the stroke of death, and to be extended before my eyes a lifeless corpse. When, on the next morning, my slumbers were disturbed by the sad tidings that one of our number had gone, it seemed to me a dream; and for a moment I put from me as an impossibility, what I had admonished you to feel as a most valuable truth. But my incredulity soon gave way to solemn conviction. I saw, I felt, that one whose friendship and kindness had given him many claims to my esteem; a most valuable member of this society; a most useful citizen; one who sustained and filled with affectionate assiduity the tenderest relations of domestic life; one whose ready zeal was pressed into the service of almost every public institution; was torn from us in a moment, before one fear for his safety had prepared the mind for his departure. He left this house at the close of the last Sabbath, with a step as firm, a form as erect, and anticipations as unchecked by apprehension, as any of us. He spoke of

the discourse he had heard ; of its application to a recent danger which he had escaped, and which threatened immediate death. He spoke of the engagements of the week, on which he had entered. In the evening he was occupied in arrangements for the approaching anniversary of a benevolent institution ; and we have reason to think that before midnight the hand of death was upon him. He was called without warning ; called in the midst of life. No infirmities or pains sloped his way to the grave. His descent was almost instantaneous to the tomb. He was taken from the midst of useful labors. He was taken from the midst of a rising family. Time was not given him to say farewell ; to receive the last offices of affection ; to give those tokens of love which survivors cherish in such tender remembrance. He was gone, before friendship could extend its supporting hand, or skill could apply its resources and mitigations. He was left in health ; he was found drawing the last breath. He had travelled the gloomy vale alone, and with a speed which outstrips imagination. What an astonishing change ! this hour, partaking of all the enjoyments of life ; the next, struggling with the last pain. This hour, vigorous, efficient,

giving the pledge of future usefulness; the next, unable to raise an arm, or to rise from the couch on which he was extended. At night, full of motion, and in the morning, lifeless, inert clay. The ear closed on the well-known voice; the eye on the light of heaven, and every familiar and beloved scene.

At night, the countenance illumined with thought and emotion, and his presence the delight of his friends; in the morning, that countenance fixed, pallid, inexpressive, and that body removed from sight, or seen only with sorrow. At night, an inhabitant of this world, a possessor of its wealth and comforts, bound to it by many ties, a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a friend. In the morning, gone for ever; placed beyond the reach of earthly kindness; every earthly tie broken; every earthly possession abandoned, and the spirit entered on an untried being. Changes so great, in so short a time, almost overwhelm the mind, and disturb the exercise of understanding. We can scarcely believe what we see.

As I stood by the body of our friend, doubt mingled with my sorrow. I spoke to him, and could hardly feel that my voice was lost in air. I pressed his cold hand, and

could hardly realize that the pressure would no more be returned. But he is gone ; gone to be seen no more in this world. I look to the seat, which he so constantly filled, and where on these occasions I have often met his fixed eye, and he is gone. I enter his house, which was always open to welcome me, and in a thousand signs I see that he is no more. In the concourse of business, he will be met no more. His zeal, which never shrunk from any work of usefulness, will no longer be our resource and aid ; his day is finished, when we thought it not half expired ; his sun is set at noon ; his labors are ended ; he is gone to his account.

To us, my friends, who were fellow-worshippers with the deceased ; who so lately received with him the admonitions of religion, to us, this event speaks loudly. Let it not speak in vain. It calls us to converse with the tomb ; to meditate on our frailty, and especially to feel our exposure to sudden death. This impression is one of the last we receive ; and yet how needed and how salutary ! In health, we place death at a distance ; we have, as we imagine, a resource of strength which cannot be easily exhausted. But who that knows the human frame, does

not know the narrow partition which separates between life and death? An artery, that thin, slender texture, which throbs beneath the touch, holds in trust the life of man. A rupture in this frail vessel is enough for our destruction. A little blood diverted from its ordinary channel, quenches at once the vital spark; the very nutriment of our frame thus becomes the cause of immediate death. Who can place his hand on the beating heart, and not feel the slightness of the bulwark which defends the fount of life? And shall such beings promise themselves many days? In addition to the delicacy of our frames, we are exposed to immediate death by almost every object which surrounds us. Every element may be converted by God into a weapon of destruction. The air which we breathe, now charged with poisonous vapor and now precipitated in storms, often destroys the life which it has sustained. In the ocean many find a sudden grave. The flame which warms and cheers, often passes its limits, and involves the dwelling and its tenants in immediate ruin. The cloud sends death on wings rapid as thought. The fleet animal who carries us has our lives at his disposal. We are never safe. The sword hangs by a hair over

our heads. Whilst we seem secure, some secret obstruction is gathering strength in the seat of life. The thin partition which removes us from death may be wearing away. This head, now crowded with so many schemes, may be smitten with sudden apoplexy. This heart, which beats with so many hopes, may be contracted with sudden and mortal spasms.

My friends, I have dwelt on your exposure to sudden death, not to fill your minds with gloomy images, but to rouse you to religious reflections, to self-examination, and to a course of life which will make death, whether sudden or long-deferred, an unspeakable blessing. I have wished to lead you to a more serious inquiry into your characters. You have seen your frailty; that on this night, or at a season as little threatening as this night, your lives may be required of you. The great question is, are you prepared for this event? are you willing to appear as you now are before God? is there no change which must be made? Do I speak to none, whose consciences remind them of God forgotten or disobeyed? of known duty habitually neglected? of known sin habitually practiced? of life spent without reflection and without regard to the ac-

knowledged revelation of God ? of social relations unfaithfully sustained ? of unjust gains ? of intemperate indulgence ? Let me advise and urge you to break off your sins by immediate repentance. The present may be the last admonition. You cannot promise yourselves the poor privileges of a dying bed. Begin to retrieve the past ; to live to God ; to be blessings to society ; to work, for the night is at hand. If death be always near, and may so suddenly overtake you, then let the whole of life be a preparation for death. This is no impracticable precept. Preparation for death does not consist exclusively, as has sometimes been thought, in immediate acts of piety, and much less in abstinence from the active pursuits and innocent pleasures of the present state. It consists in what may be our constant business ; in the discharge of our various duties toward God, our neighbors, and ourselves ; and is always proportioned to the degree of improvement which we have made in a sober, righteous, and godly life. At all times and in all places, it is possible to prepare for death. Every christian duty, no matter when or where performed ; every act of uprightness ; every benevolent purpose and deed ; every candid judgment ; every forgiv-

ing disposition ; every temperate and grateful reception of God's blessings ; every resignation of ourselves to God's will ; every conscientious labor ; every exercise of domestic virtue ; every restraint of our passions ; every conquest over temptation ; every service to the cause of religion and virtue ; every sacrifice of ease and interest to truth and justice and others' happiness ; in one word, every thought, word, feeling, or action, which is regulated by a sense of duty, which expresses a christian spirit, which contributes to the improvement of our characters, enters into and constitutes a part of our preparation for that solemn change, to which we are constantly exposed. Be this your serious concern. Do not forget your characters and your future interest in pursuit of a world which may so suddenly vanish from you.

W. E. C.

## **The Christian's Victory over Death.**

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**O Death, where is thy sting ! O Grave, where is thy victory !**

THE victory which God has given us over death is illustrated by St. Paul in one of the most interesting and impressive chapters in the New Testament. He insists on the fact of our Lord's real and literal resurrection ; and infers from it the final and literal resurrection of all mankind. He defends and illustrates the subject as a fundamental doctrine of the gospel.

In considering some of the means by which God gives us this victory, we may remark,

1. That he has provided for it in the original constitution of the human mind, by enabling us to find support and constancy under the pressure of present evil, in our anticipations of future good.

The mere fact of our immortality could do nothing of course to sustain us in the hour of death, unless it were revealed ; and even if it were revealed, it would still be to no purpose, unless our minds were capable of appreciating

and applying the doctrine. It is not enough that we believe in the abstract doctrine of a future state. We must be able, in some sense, to make this future state present to us and enter upon it as it were by anticipation, so that what we hope may sustain us under what we endure. A wise and merciful Creator has provided for this in the original constitution of man; a principle which we continually see operating, even in the affairs of this world, to soothe the pains and lighten the burdens of human life. We not only hope for good to come, but this hope enables us to enter on the actual enjoyment of this good as it were by anticipation. We hope to meet a friend, and this hope brings up the image of our friend; and we feel for the moment as if he were before us, and the thought is attended with something of the joy of the real meeting. I verily believe, that but for this power which God has given us to borrow from the future, the troubles of life would be insupportable.

What is it that cheers the toil of the indefatigable student, but the hope of the knowledge and distinction his acquirements will give him, and which he already begins to enjoy by anticipation? What is it that braces

the nerves of the sick man to submit with such firmness to the severest and most painful remedies, but the hope of returning health, which he already begins to enjoy by anticipation? What is it that keeps up the spirits of the weary traveller, when he considers the fatigues and dangers of the way that separates him from his home, but the thought of that home and its delights, which he already begins to enjoy by anticipation? And so it is with the pilgrim of eternity. Oh! it is a glorious prerogative of man, that his immortal part can go out from amidst the circumstances of gloom and sorrow, by which the mortal is encompassed and oppressed, and live in other scenes. The soul of the dying christian is not dying with his body; but is back in memory among the happy scenes of a well-spent life; or is mingling in affectionate embraces with the friends it is to leave; or has already entered by anticipation on the joys of heaven. The valley of the shadow of death is before him; but before his feet have begun to descend, his mind has crossed it, and is living and rejoicing in fields of perpetual verdure and brightness, that have met his vision, and stretch interminably beyond.

2. Another means by which God has given

us the victory over death is by inspiring us with entire confidence in the wisdom and goodness of his dispensations.

In this respect our heavenly Father has proceeded as any other parent would in regard to his children. He has taken measures to deserve and obtain our entire confidence. Without this confidence in him personally, of course we could have none in his promises, or in the scriptures which contain those promises. We pause then, and ponder on the ways of God, from which alone we are to infer his character; and we find them every where marked, and strongly marked, by an essential and inexhaustible benignity. Nay, we find that a principal reason why we do not make more of his blessings is, that they are so common; and a principal reason why we make so much of his judgments is, that they are so rare. Evil, to be sure, is sometimes incident to the arrangements and organizations which God has made in the constitution of nature. But in no one instance can it be shown to be the ultimate object of such arrangements and organizations; while on the other hand good can be shown to be the ultimate object in instances without number. Besides, when the evil comes, even with our

very limited experience and observation, we can almost always see that it tends to some good result, and is necessary to our final happiness; and of course, instead of being an objection to the divine benevolence it is another indication of it. And what though in a few cases we may be unable to discern the object of a painful and afflictive dispensation? Is it at all wonderful that the creatures of a day, to whom the simplest events in nature are so many miracles,—is it at all wonderful that we should be unable at times to fathom the purposes of infinite wisdom? And at such times, is it too much to expect of us, that we should show an implicit confidence in a Being, who certainly can have no motive to give us unnecessary pain, and who has proved himself in so many ways our friend and benefactor?

We are ready enough to put the same sort of confidence in our fellow-men, as far as their power extends. If an approved physician prescribes a painful and apparently dangerous remedy, we do not hesitate to apply it, though unable ourselves to discern any good purpose it can answer; because, we say, that this is a subject on which the physician is much better qualified to judge than we are.

Bewildered and lost in the passes and defiles of a mountainous country, we procure a guide, who leads us on through by-ways and dark passages, that seem but to involve us more and more. Still we do not hesitate to follow him, because we say that this is a subject on which the guide must know much more than we can. To be sure, the power of man stops at the grave, and we cannot therefore trust him to deliver us from that. But we can trust the Almighty; for the dead as well as the living are in his hands. The last words of the dying believer will be: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

3. Again, God gives us the victory over death, by leading us to take proper views of the nature and purpose of death itself.

Physically speaking, there seems to be no reason to suppose death so great an evil as our imaginations are wont to make it. A person who recovers from an acute disease probably suffers much more from that disease than he would have done, if he had died. Many die without any signs of pain at all, as if falling into a swoon or deep sleep. Nay, in some diseases, ease and insensibility are

reckoned the most fatal symptoms; and the approach of death is known, not by an increase, but by a total cessation of pain.

What is there then in being dead, from which an enlightened christian should shrink? Man is created with powers and capacities capable of unlimited expansion and improvement; and for wise reasons is set to begin an endless career of advancement in a lower state of being, than that on which he is afterwards to live and act; just as a child is set to learn his first lessons in an inferior school, and is afterwards taken out of that school and placed in a higher. Destined therefore to live and act in a higher state of being than the present, there must of course come a time when we shall pass into it; there must come a moment of transition, and this moment of transition is what we call death. It is not extinction, or suffering, or punishment; but transition merely. Our characters will remain the same afterwards as before; and of course our principal sources of happiness or misery will remain the same. Death is merely a transition from one mode of existence to another. It is the mortal putting on the immortal. This to the christian, we should think, would be an object of desire,

of sincere and heart-felt desire, and not of terror and dread. If it should be objected, that no one can know what awaits himself or his friends after death, it is enough to say in reply, that we do not know what awaits us before death. If we continue to live in this world, it must depend on the mercy of God whether we are happy or miserable; or if we die, we have but to confide in that same mercy. There is no extravagance therefore in what the apostle has said: "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

4. Lastly, we are expressly taught, that God gives us this victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is true in several respects. In the first place because though many wise and good Jews and heathens held to the principles we have advanced, it was merely as matter of speculation, or at best of conjecture and hope; and it is only through our Lord Jesus Christ that we know them on the authority of an accredited and inspired teacher. Secondly, by our Lord's own resurrection, he has given assurance, an earnest as it were,

the evidence of example and fact, for the final resurrection of all mankind. This was necessary. For after all that reason could do, there was something so strange, and startling, and contrary to the report of our senses and all experience, in this doctrine of a resurrection, that we needed the evidence of example and fact, to remove all feeling of its impossibility and incongruity; and give us, instead of the faint hope of the deist, a living and practical conviction. Thirdly, through the religion which our Lord has given us, he would lead us on to those higher attainments and exercises in virtue and piety, which, by the effect they have on the temper, never fail to inspire an unwavering confidence in God, and the final and happy issue of all his dispensations. Our victory over death depends on the moral and religious proficiency we have made; and this again depends on the instructions and motives set before us by our Lord Jesus Christ; and of course it is through him that we conquer. Lastly, our Lord may be said to have purchased us, as it were, by the sacrifices he has made on our account; and by the character he still bears as our intercessor and advocate with the Father. This removes the only remaining

objection which the good man, conscious of his imperfections, might otherwise feel to going alone and unsupported into the presence of a Being whom all have offended; before whom even the angels are not pure. Trusting in what his Saviour has done for him and in the power of his intercession, the grave has no terrors for the sincere and devout christian; his triumph, his victory is complete.

How great and constant should be our gratitude to God for this victory, which he has given us over the last, most dreaded and worst-looking of our foes! Let us cherish and cultivate an undoubting faith in those hopes and expectations of another life which alone can deliver from that spiritual bondage which the fear of death inspires. Let us guard against and repel all temptations to skepticism on this subject, as we would guard against and repel temptations to sin or self-destruction. Above all, let us form and accustom ourselves to holiness; for when the scriptures say, that without holiness we cannot see the Lord, they mean, not only that we shall not see him hereafter, but that we cannot see him here; and our troubles will unman and overwhelm us, unless we can see

in the hand that afflicts us the hand of a Father. When called to do it, in the Providence of God, let us follow our friends with a pious and unwavering trust to those peaceful abodes where the dead sleep, yielding them up, without a repining thought, into the hands of Him who has been pleased to make the grave the gate of heaven. Perhaps our loss has been great, peculiarly great; but then it is the measure and nothing but the measure of the blessing we have had. In the midst of our sorrow, therefore, let us not forget devoutly to thank God, not indeed that we have lost such a friend, but that "we have had such a friend to lose." And when our own frames are sinking under age or infirmity, may our spirits be sustained by that noble confidence, of which the apostle speaks: "Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

J. W.

## The Occasions and Remedy of Excessive Grief.

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When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock,  
that is higher than I.

THERE are sorrows in which the heart may be overwhelmed. There are forms and circumstances of grief, in the remembrance of which even the most submissive child of God may say, "I had fainted, except I had trusted to see the goodness of the Lord." But expressions like these are to be applied only to the severest calamities. They can seldom be employed because, happily, the sufferings they denote are unusual. In the ordinary trials of life we are not permitted to yield to overwhelming grief. Such a state would be disproportionate to the nature of the affliction, and inconsistent with our character as christians and as men. The loss of property, unless involving a loss of reputation, which, unregretted and unatoned for, admits no solace; the disappointment of some earthly hope, of our vanity, ambition, or any selfish passion, and even bereavement itself, in its

most usual forms, would scarcely justify that desolation of the spirit, which seems implied in the expression of the royal Psalmist. Nor are there many who are in much danger from such a state. The great proportion of mankind are impatient of trouble. It stays not long enough to overwhelm them. They are eager to seek relief, as well from its monitions as its pains, in the business or the amusements of life ; and one of the hardest works of religion is to teach some men how to feel ; to persuade them to regard the operation of the Lord, and not to despise his chastening. But even where there exists a greater sensibility, the common trials which our heavenly Father appoints are compatible with an inward tranquillity and the right discharge of duty. We should be grateful that it is so. Otherwise, the wheels of life would stop ; the order of families would be disturbed ; and the affairs of the world would be exposed to perpetual interruption.

What then are the afflictions that overwhelm the soul ? It may be difficult to describe them. They will be more easily understood than uttered ; for they are those in which the heart only can know its own bitterness, and the stranger cannot intermeddle. They are

those in which Jehovah sometimes appears in his mysterious and incomprehensible majesty ; in his character as sovereign and judge, "creating darkness and evil," rather than peace ; when his way is in the sea, and his footsteps in the deep ; when in the language of the desponding Psalmist, "deep calleth unto deep ;" one wave of sorrow succeeds another ; and "all God's billows are rolling over us." There are instances when all the divine chastisements seem at once inflicted ; and the record of domestic calamity, like the scroll beheld in the vision of the prophet, is inscribed, "within and without, with lamentation and mourning and wo." Have you never known the pious and affectionate father, the tender and devoted mother, called to part in quick succession with the children of their love ? with the fair objects of their dependence and hope ? When so frequent and so speedy were the ravages of death, that the turf could scarcely harden over their recently-opened tomb, before it would be again and again disturbed to receive another and another, till, within a few weeks, almost a whole family shall be laid together in the dark and narrow house ; and the dwelling, that but a little before was the seat of

domestic cheerfulness, affection, and hope, is turned to solitude and gloom? Let us bless God that we are not often called to witness such sad reverses. Yet, when the pestilence walks in darkness and contagion multiplies its victims, such are no uncommon displays of the divine judgments. Amidst too those awful desolations of nature, sometimes occurring in regions less favored than our own—in the whirlwind, the earthquake, or the falling mountain—instances have been known, when scarcely one was spared of a numerous house; or if a solitary survivor of his family, he may find himself without a friend to impart comfort to his desolated soul. To those also who, even amidst the happiest communities, are conversant with the children of affliction, examples are never long wanting to exercise their painful sympathies; in which poverty and sickness combine, perhaps, with the inflictions of vice and of an upbraiding conscience, to give to bereavement a peculiar and aggravated distress. It would be easy to portray scenes which many may have witnessed; and in comparison with which the more common allotments of heaven seem as tender mercies.

But there are other forms of overwhelming

sorrow. Here is a confiding and devoted wife mourning in the bitterness of unrequited affection, the cruelty, the unfaithfulness, or the intemperance of her husband. Here is a pious and anxious parent weeping in anguish over a thankless, profligate, irreclaimable child. Or, sad and unnatural reverse, because it violates the order of nature, here is a conscientious, dutiful child put to shame and confusion by the unworthiness of a parent. These are pangs, only the sharper, because they are secret; in which, as the grief may not be uttered, it cannot ask for solace. To whom indeed but to God himself can we look for consolation, when the choicest gifts of his goodness, all which was designed for blessing, and joy, and hope, become the occasion of our deep humiliation or unutterable distress. It is then surely, if ever, we must say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God. My expectation is from him."

We must leave to experience, or rather, we will hope, only to imagination or sympathy, a nearer view of these appalling trials. Yet there is one which has been untouched, but through which the most precious hopes and the fairest prospects of life may be laid in ruins. To say nothing then of friendships

once fondly cherished changed to rancorous, unrelenting hatred, have you known the light of reason extinguished ; the finest faculties confounded ; the imagination darkened or presenting only images of despair ; and all that made a wife, a child, a parent or brother precious, turned to worse than uselessness ; to thicker darkness than of the valley of the shadow of death ? Then you have known something of the sorrows by which the heart may be overwhelmed.

But you ask, is it permitted to the christian to yield to overwhelming grief ? Is there not enough in the great truths which he professes at all times to sustain him ? And must there not be a criminal defect of faith and hope in yielding thus to heart-breaking sorrow ? True it is, that he whose heart is fixed, trusting in God, will never be confounded. No evil tidings, no calamities, however appalling, can prevail over him who believes in God, and who believes also in Christ. Amidst the most disastrous reverses in his person, his possessions, or friendships, his eye of faith will be on him who can sustain him ; and his language, and the feeling of his whole soul will be, "God is my refuge ; a very present help in the day of trouble. Therefore will I not

fear, though the earth be removed." Nay, he will even say with the royal sufferer, " Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

But in inquiring how far a state of dejection can ever be compatible with the submission that under every circumstance becomes the christian, we must allow not only for the general infirmities of our nature, but for the particular diversities of natural temperament. Some, by original constitution, by early discipline, and the course of their lives, inuring them to sorrow, can look on all adversity with a steady eye. Their strength is as the strength of brass; and they would regard the tenderness of grief as an unmanly weakness. Such persons, even without the aid of religion, are able to endure severe calamities with a firmness that minds more susceptible but more also under the influence of piety, would with the utmost difficulty sustain. But with me, it is scarcely a question whether such a temperament be desirable. — Who would be willing to sacrifice to the pride of philosophy or to 'a monstrous perfection,' the best and tenderest feelings of the heart, which are the handmaids of virtue; which unite us with the angels of mercy; with the spirits of the good; with our compassionate Saviour, who gave him-

self for us; and with the God, who is love. Stoicism or hardness of heart is no part of the christian. It is not the soil in which christian graces can flourish. The religion of Christ is eminently the religion of the heart. It cherishes and improves the finest sensibilities of the soul. In the example of its divine author, who himself was "grieved;" was "troubled in spirit;" who wept at the grave of his friend and in the prospect of the ruin of Jerusalem, we learn that we may weep. We see at once the sensibility which his religion permits, and the consolation which faith in his religion opens to us. He tells us that we may sorrow; only not as those who are without hope. We may grieve; but we must not murmur. Nay, like his own apostles, we may be cast down, but not in despair; mourn before God, but never charge him foolishly.

The gospel teaches us to find our solace, not in a proud stoicism, nor a vain philosophy, that can never purify the heart; not by doing violence to a nature which God has touched to the finest issues, or opposing his Providence, which is love; not by resolving his kind and wise appointments into an irresistible fate; nor drowning the grief, which heaven designed to sanctify and exalt, in the

cares or the follies of life. The christian's remedy for sorrow is very different from all this. He knows that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; that all things shall work together for good to them that love him; that even calamity itself shall yield peaceful fruits. Therefore, when his heart is overwhelmed he goes, as did the Saviour in whom he trusts, "to the Rock, higher than he." There he finds his refuge and defence. He finds a wisdom that cannot err; a goodness which no neglect, ingratitude or sin can change; a compassion and faithfulness which, like the everlasting hills, cannot be moved.

F. P.

April 10, 1830.

## The Contemplation of Nature a Source of Consolation.

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Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? —JESUS CHRIST

THE most effectual and permanent source of consolation, under any afflictive event, is doubtless the conviction that all events are wisely ordered by a controlling Providence. How then is such a conviction to be acquired? Arguments, strong and good ones, calculated to impress it on the mind with an indelible stamp, are to be found in a wide range of true christian divinity; for the ways of God to man have been justified by the wisest and greatest among the sons of men. Let those whose feelings, habits or engagements will permit them to put their faculties upon a course of sustained exercise, study these arguments, and I entertain no fear of the result. I believe that as the investigation is pursued, conviction will grow up and strengthen, and bear the fruits of comfort, submission and peace.

Yet there is one short and perfectly simple train of thought, which is as satisfactory on this subject as the most labored process of reasoning. For my own part, at least, I need but a single reflection to silence every doubt and dissipate every fear. I look abroad on the works of the Almighty. There is not a single object on which I turn my eye, which does not display a wisdom and skill which fill me with admiration and wonder. From the dew-drop which trembles and glitters on the leaf, to the world which rolls and shines in space, all is admirable, and all is wonderful. In senseless matter and in living things; in secret powers and visible agencies; in motion, attraction and rest; in growth and decay; in life and in death, there is an arrangement and a certainty which inspire me with confidence, and a depth of knowledge which is past my finding out. And what am I, that I should question the originating and guiding intelligence of a system like this? Can the skill which modelled so many forms of beauty and magnificence ever be mistaken, or exhausted? Can the wisdom and the power which suspended vast and countless worlds in infinitude, which preserve their admirable arrangement, and in all their paths

and motions keep them from the slightest interference with each other, fail to adjust, in the best manner, the affairs of one small spot, in which I and a few fellow-mortals dwell together ? I ask myself this simple question, — Can the wisdom of nature's God ever judge unwisely ? It is entirely and absolutely impossible.

And therefore, if there were no other inducements to the love, contemplation and study of nature, than the religious convictions which they tend to form, and the satisfactory evidences, which they furnish, of a benign and careful Providence, surely these would be amply sufficient. There is a constancy and calmness, a lasting beauty and majesty in the forms and operations which are all around us, which tell of a hand that never tires and an eye that never sleeps. A consolation is expressed in their settled serenity, steadiness and obedience, which argument and eloquence may attempt in vain to afford, and to which we may securely resort for comfort when other sources have failed us. This fountain is ever fresh, ever flowing, and ever full. The tide of our fortunes and the hearts of men may change ; but nature remains the same. Calamities may overtake

us; disappointments may blight our most cherished hopes; we may be grieved, wronged, depressed, wearied with the world, and wearied with ourselves; and yet the day will glow with the same brightness; the night will return with her unaltered train of splendor; and the continued order and tranquillity of creation will convey to our hearts the assuring intelligence that all is well.

Yes, all is well in the course of the universe; in the dispensations of Providence; in the ways of our heavenly Father. If we will acquiesce and be instructed, all will be well too with us. Nothing but our own pride, or waywardness, or dullness, stands between these salutary operations and ourselves. Let us submit, and obey, and love; let us coöperate with the great Disposer; let us go along with him in his paths, confidingly and humbly; and all will be well, both without and within us; completely and forever well.

F. W. P. G.

April 15th, 1890.

## Gratitude amidst Sorrows.

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Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine ; though the labor of the olive should fail, and the fields should yield no meat ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord ; I will joy in the God of my salvation.

IT is essential to true devotion that we cherish such views of the divine character as shall inspire, not submission only, but religious joy, under every circumstance of life. Joy is "a delight of the mind," arising from the possession or the near prospect of good. Gratitude is a thankful sense of benefits received, disposing to proportionate returns. But both our religious joy and gratitude are too limited in their objects and extent. There is apt to be something selfish and mercenary in their nature. We confine them to the day of our prosperity ; when our blessings are many ; our hopes are cheering ; and, as it is expressed by the patriarch, when the candle of the Lord is shining around us. But have we not reason to fear that these emotions are little better than the gayety of

animal spirits? They are scattered with the first blast of adversity, and changed to dejection and distrust. Now it belongs to the true child of God, under every circumstance, whether of blessing or affliction, amidst the overflowing of divine bounty and the want of all outward comforts, to rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of his salvation.

To the worldly mind, who can discern no good and therefore no cause for gratitude, except in present enjoyments, this sentiment may appear extravagant or absurd. Do you call upon me to rejoice in adversity, when my blessings and my hopes are taken from me? What is this but mad enthusiasm, which affects to find pleasure in fasts and mortifications, in painful vigils and self-inflictions; or the insensibility of the stoic, who pretends that suffering is but a name; or perhaps it is no better than the proud defiance of the savage, who can smile at the worst tortures his conqueror can inflict, and sing his war-song amidst the agonies of death?

But the sentiment I would recommend has no alliance with all this. It is grounded on a pure love of God; on just views of human life; and on a firm faith of the life to come,

which can find causes for gratitude, notwithstanding the loss of earthly good.

1. Religious joy, such as the prophet declares he could feel amidst famine, desolation, and all calamity, rests on God for its object. It is not dependant for its existence or degree upon outward circumstances. It fixes the mind, not so much on the benefit received as on the source whence it flows. The gratitude therefore with which it is accompanied, or rather of which it is an essential part, depends not on the value of the gift but on the infinite grace of the Giver. As the faithful subject receives with thankfulness the slightest favor, even a complacent look, from an honored sovereign, so will the devoted child of God regard the most common gift as coming from his bounteous hand. In the same manner, we do not estimate the tokens received from a cherished friend by any sordid calculations of their value, but simply as the pledges of an affection in which we rejoice; which, whether bestowed or not, still yield us pleasure in the contemplation of his virtues, and in the hope of possessing his regard. By inferior comparisons like these we may learn something of the foundations of the christian's joy in God. It is not so much,

I repeat, in his benefits as in his infinite perfections; joy in his immutable nature; in his almighty power; in his unerring wisdom; in his spotless holiness and impartial justice; his exhaustless goodness; his paternal love. So that amidst all change, the disappointment of his earthly hopes, the loss of all temporal good, the "first good, the first fair," remains; and he can say, the Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation.

2. In the great principle of faith, and especially in the prospects of the religion which he has received from Jesus Christ, the christian possesses also an unfailing source of joy. In this blessed religion he reads the promises of pardon and peace with God, and is assured of the supply of all his spiritual wants. He is instructed by it of the vanity of this life, of the certainty and reality of the life to come. And it is enough to sustain him in all his griefs, that beyond the darkness and the shadows of the present he shall find a celestial home; that there awaits him a glorious immortality, for which his "light afflictions" shall but have served to prepare him.

3. The state of mind to which the loss of earthly blessings, when faithfully improved,

conduces, is a third source of religious joy, and a just cause for gratitude to God. "Before I was afflicted," said David, "I went astray; but now I have kept thy word." And in the salutary lessons which his adversity had taught him, he adds, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." Had he enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, he might have departed yet farther from God. At least he might never have attained to that near communion with him, through which he has become to all ages an example of piety. The experience of the royal Psalmist is the experience of multitudes. Adversity calls us home. It leads us from the creature to the Creator. In acquainting us with him, it gives us peace. It invites to prayer; and thus opens an inexhaustible resource of instruction, of consolation, and hope. It exposes our fallacious dependence on the world; and fixes our hearts there, where only true joy is to be found. Ask of the suffering christian, and I doubt not he can tell you, that he has had reason to bless the hours of his sorrow. Nay, that when to the earthly eye every thing seemed most calamitous, and no prospects opening from the world to gladden him, he

has yet enjoyed in the submission of his soul to God ; in the conviction he has derived of the reality and the value of his faith ; in the peace that comes with prayer ; in the spirituality of his frame ; in his invigorated resolution ; in the serenity of his conscience ; and above all, in the visitations of God's spirit, "whose entrance giveth light," more pure, more heartfelt pleasure, than the world with all its satisfactions had ever yielded him. Has he not reason then to joy in God ?

4. There is a pleasure also to the good man, amidst his own griefs, derived from the happiness of others. His satisfactions of benevolence are independent of any selfish regard to his own condition ; and he does not lose them even though he loses the power of bestowing. Though his own fig-tree may not blossom and his own fields may yield no meat, yet he will be glad if God has blessed his neighbor with a plenteous harvest. With the disinterested love which the Saviour has taught him, he will be pleased to witness good indulged to others which has been denied to himself. Instead of yielding to envy or ill will, he will derive a solace to his own sufferings from the thought that so many are exempted. He will consider himself but as

one of a countless family, and God as the universal father, the constant friend, the bounteous benefactor of mankind. Nor will he suffer the sense of his own privations to diminish his gratification in surveying the vast stores of comfort and happiness provided for his fellow-creatures. So far indeed from hardening his heart, his sorrows will dispose him to open it the wider, and to make more tender and more effectual all his sympathies with others. Nor can this be considered as an extravagance which only the enthusiast can feel. It is but an imperfect imitation of him who pleased not himself, who took upon him our infirmities and became poor, that we might be rich.

5. Lastly, the true child of God, under present troubles, will find a devout pleasure in surveying his past experiences of divine mercy. He will recall with gratitude, "the days when God preserved him. As he was in the day of his youth, when the secret of the Most High was upon his tabernacle ; when his glory was fresh in him, and the rock poured him out rivers of oil." Or, if he has never known that fulness of honor and prosperity which this fine imagery would seem to imply, he can at least remember many expres-

sions of the divine goodness. If he is now in want, he will not forget how long and how graciously his wants were supplied ; or if now in sickness, how many months and years of health had been permitted him. If it now be to him the night of bereavement, and lover and friend are put far from him, he will yet give thanks that his friends were spared so long. "Sweet, also, will be the memory of God's grace." The christian, in his deepest affliction, will recall with a sacred pleasure all his experience of the divine presence to his soul ; all the consolation he has found in sorrow ; all the strength imparted in temptation ; and in the new energy supplied to his faith, in the encouragement of christian sympathy, and the various offices of friendship, he will delight to acknowledge the mercy which is mingled with judgment, and which has followed him all his days.

We have spoken of the causes of gratitude which remain after the loss of all earthly good, and which are found in God and religion alone. But it is seldom indeed that any of his children are left desolate. Amidst the most complicated privation, how many blessings are yet untouched ! If health be taken, reason is left. If affluence or even compe-

tence be denied, enough for necessity is granted. If bereaved of one friend, how many others are spared ! Or if that friend was the near and the dear, in whom we had fondly trusted, who was even to us as our own selves, have we no cause for thankfulness that such a friend was lent, and so long continued ? Have we never found too that when one source of happiness has been closed, it was but to open another ? What though a single hope has been disappointed, how many others have been satisfied ; so that at the very moment we are weeping over one calamity, God's bounteous hand is pouring upon us unnumbered blessings. And are there no comforts, if we may not call them pleasures, peculiar to a state of sorrow ? Is it not God's merciful design in appointing it, to disengage us for a season from the tumults and passions of the world, and to give us his own peace, such as the world never gives ? Does not suffering create for us new sympathies, and show to us what before we might have distrusted, the faithfulness as well as efficacy of christian friendship ? And even though it should force upon us some painful remembrances of ourselves, yet in the severity of self-examination : in the tender-

ness of contrition and the reviving hopes of virtue, there is an holy calm of the spirit, the peace of God, which passeth understanding.

How well then is fulfilled to the christian that promise of his Lord : “ Your hearts shall rejoice ; and your joy shall no man take from you ! ” In every thing he gives thanks ; for he can find occasions for gratitude in all. He praises God for his mercies. He can praise him also for his judgments. And though every earthly comfort be taken, he can still praise him for the hope of heaven ; for the gift of Christ Jesus. He can “ praise him for himself alone.”

F. P.

## The Influence of the Dead on the Living.

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No man dieth to himself.

No one can be taken away without leaving a perceptible void. It may not indeed be observed by us, and yet to the fond eye of affection it seems a chasm that nothing can fill. The death of almost every individual is a loss; generally a serious loss to his family and to the circle in which he moved; often-times an important loss to society. So variously and so closely are we connected by the bonds of kindred and intimacy, that not one link in the chain can be broken without loosening and weakening the whole.

"No man dieth to himself." He dieth to the living; and to them this is the saddest circumstance of all. The places that once knew him now know him no more. In the church we look for the well-known features of our friend; but he is not there; the widow and the fatherless sit alone in the desolate pew; or the countenances of strangers return

our inquiring gaze. The eye seeks for him in the family; but his seat is vacant at the hearth and at the board. The door opens; but the expected and familiar form does not enter. We seek in vain for those placid features which were wont to salute us with the cheering smile of a benignant sympathy. We listen in vain to catch the mild accents of that sweet voice which once spoke with so much wisdom and tenderness of human virtue and of human wo. It is mute, that

#### THE TIME TABLE.

How many seconds in a minute?  
Sixty, and no more in it.

How many minutes in an hour?  
Sixty for sun and shower.

How many hours in a day?  
Twenty-four for work and play.

How many days in a week?  
Seven both to hear and speak.

How many weeks in a month?  
Four, as the swift moon runn' th.

How many months in a year?  
Twelve, the almanac makes clear,

How many years in an age?  
One hundred, says the sage.

How many ages in time?  
No one knows the rhyme.

consolation  
ass those little  
expressions of  
the natural  
d which were  
souls. Yes,  
feel that he  
feel that to us  
cancy in our  
to fill. We  
n nothing ca-  
sacred place.  
appears to us  
inferior.  
y important  
true. " No  
nfluence still

remains with the living. His memory survives, and is fondly and sacredly cherished. A busy fancy is wont to summon up the shadowy forms of departed loveliness and goodness, and to present to our admiring view the well-known features and movements of those who once walked with us in the crowded paths of life. It is a natural feeling which invests every thing that belonged to them with a solemn interest, and consecrates the very ground on which they trod.

"No man dieth to himself;" for his example is left behind for the imitation of the survivors; and they often derive a melancholy pleasure from reflecting on his virtues, and recounting his good deeds. The righteous man, though dead, continues to exert a power over those who knew and loved him. His character is not interred with his bones, but is embalmed in a grateful remembrance. It still exists, an abiding monument, a speaking witness of his worth. With his name are associated the holiest thoughts and the most delightful recollections. His friends honor and love virtue the more, from having seen it exemplified and illustrated in the life of one whom they venerated and esteemed. They cannot cease to admire and love it, so long as

his hallowed image is present to their minds. His superior worth is a constant monitor, inciting them onwards, and chiding their indifference and delay. Yes, in leaving behind him such a character, the good man bequeaths the most precious legacy. He shows us by his example to what a high measure of moral and spiritual excellence our nature is capable of attaining. He proves to us that the character which christianity requires us to form is not an imaginary nor an impracticable thing. We have need of such instances of purity and goodness, to instruct and encourage us. We should bless God for affording us the opportunity to witness such manifestations of the power of religious principle and the loveliness of christian virtue.

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I know well,  
That they who love their friends most tenderly,  
Still bear their loss the best. There is in love  
A consecrated power, that seems to wake  
Only at the touch of death, from its repose  
In the profoundest depths of thinking souls,  
Superior to the outward signs of grief,  
Sighing, or tears. When these have passed away,  
It rises calm and beautiful, like the moon,  
Saddening the solemn night, yet with that sadness  
Mingling the breath of undisturbed peace.

Whilst we thus dwell with a mournful pleasure on the memory of those who once walked

with us on earth, we should ask ourselves, seriously and candidly, what there was in their circumstances and characters that now so endears them to our remembrance? What was there in their natural or acquired endowments that commanded our reverence and conciliated our esteem and love? Was it their fortune? O! no; though it may have been princely; for there were thousands whose treasures exceeded theirs, yet who never extorted from us a single expression of admiration or affection. It surely was not the regularity of their features, the symmetry of their forms, the grace of their carriage, or the enchantment of their address; for however engaging these exterior qualities may be; whatever charm they may throw around the person of their possessor; however much they may recommend the living man to the society of the refined and gentle; yet surely it is not for the possession of such qualities merely that the memory of the departed is cherished. It is not their intellect chiefly which is embalmed in your hearts, though that may have been vigorous and fertile; for you have witnessed many a brighter genius; you have mourned over the perversion of talents far more splendid than theirs. Nor was

it solely the tie of blood or brotherhood that bound you to them; for affection does not always rise and fall with the degrees of relationship; and you know that some of your fondest remembrances are of those who could put in no such claim to your regard.

What was it then, which so enchain'd you to them, which death has not been able to destroy, and to which you now point as the only enduring part of their nature? It was their pure spirits, their unspotted souls, their sincere hearts, their kind feelings, their amiable dispositions, their excellent virtues. These are the qualities of departed worth on which friendship loves to dwell; for she knows that these are the qualities which are imperishable, recommend their possessor to God, and fit him for heaven. Moral purity, spiritual excellence; this is the object of our being, the perfection of our nature, the only thing worth striving for, the only thing about us that is truly ours, the only thing that is immortal. Your wealth, your fame, your learning, your beauty — what are they but the mere accidents of your earthly existence; the mortal integuments which you must cast off before you can enter the world of spirits?

Let us then expend our thoughts and lavish

our labors in ennobling and purifying the incorruptible part of our nature. Let us be incited to this by the example of those excellent ones whose characters we revere and whose memory is precious to our souls. Can you not fancy that from the regions of peace and blessedness those pure and happy spirits are now looking down upon you, and watching with the eye of friendly solicitude the course in which you have at length resolved to go — whether it be through the wide gate and along the broad path that leadeth far from their dwelling place, far from light and peace and joy, or whether it be through the straight gate and along the narrow way which leadeth unto life, up to the throne of God? That child, which was cut down prematurely in its infant simplicity and innocence, may now be watching with filial piety the steps of its earthly parent; and the dearest hope of its heart perhaps is, that it may be the first to welcome you to those abodes of purity and bliss. What a rich consolation does this thought inspire! What a powerful incentive does it supply to the heart of the tender and affectionate christian to walk in the ways of truth and righteousness! O let us not by our disobedience and irreligion forfeit the hope of

a blissful reunion with those dear friends who have departed this life in peace, in peace with the world, with their own consciences, and with their God.

O let us keep the soul embalmed and pure  
 In living virtue ; that, when both must sever,  
 Although corruption may our frame consume,  
 The immortal spirit in the skies may bloom.

Thus should we endeavor to improve the troubles that are brought upon us. We should permit them to exert their natural influence on our hearts and characters. Let us open our bosoms to the teachings of affliction ; for affliction is the best school of virtue. It humbles the proud spirit and softens the hard heart. It prepares the mind for the reception of good influences, and the cultivation of religious principle and sentiment. Upon the heart of the prosperous, the voice of religion often makes no more impression than the light dew-drop upon the marble pavement. But when the same heart is intenerated by grief, the whisper of religious consolation is heard with joy, and may have a deep and abiding power.

Would to heaven that the sanctifying influences of bereavement were as deep and abiding as they are vivid and poignant : that

the emotions and sentiments it awakens were not as transient as the tear that suffuses the cheek, or the throb that heaves the bosom ! Would to heaven that the good feelings and purposes, which are excited in our minds by the remembrance of the sainted dead, might be watered by the dews of divine grace, and be ripened into the fair fruits of piety and holiness ! O that the passions, which are now subdued by the pressure of domestic sorrow, might never again be roused into fury by the collisions and rivalries of a turbulent world ! O that the heart, which now melts at the mere mention of those it once loved, might never again be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin !

The posthumous influence of character is usually in proportion to the intellectual power and the moral worth of the departed ; and is more or less extensive according as he was known and appreciated when living. To every family indeed, however humble and obscure, the virtues of a deceased member are precious ; and as you enlarge the sphere of his intimacy and usefulness, you increase the salutary influence which the remembrance of his good deeds is suited to exert on the survivors. What a powerful motive does this consideration present to a devout and

holy life! To believe that our virtues will live after us; that our memories will be cherished and our characters be operating upon others long after our bodies have mingled with the dust; this surely, of all the subordinate incitements to well-doing, must occupy the first and highest place. It is a glorious and animating thought, that we may do good even after death; and who that is warmed with that sincere and ardent love for his brethren which christianity inculcates, will not feel desirous of speaking to them, even from the tomb, and of urging them onwards in the way of wisdom, peace and salvation?

A. Y.

## The Efficacy of Religious Consolation.

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Take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to stand  
in the evil day.—**St. PAUL.**

OF all the offices of christianity, that which she assumes in the hour of affliction appears to be the least understood. A power is ascribed to her over misfortune; but the nature of this power and the manner of its exercise are matters about which the common notions of men are extremely indistinct. Religion is sometimes spoken of as if it held an enchanter's wand over all the evils of our condition. And in fact the general idea seems to be, that it is alike effectual in all cases. But this expectation has been disappointed, and instances are frequently occurring in which religion appears to possess no sort of power, when her gracious consolations have no more effect than “the loud sighings of the wind.” Cases of this kind have unhappily, but very naturally, created strong doubts as to the efficacy of religious consolation. Many are disposed to deny to religion any ability to assuage human

grief; and to rest all their hopes of relief, in the season of bereavement, upon the course of time and nature. Thus is christianity thrust out of one of the most important stations that her blessed founder intended she should occupy.

Now all this misapprehension arises from the neglect of one simple but most important truth. It seems to be wholly forgotten, that religion has neither any power nor does it aim to have any, except so far as it has become a deep, habitual and living sentiment. It cannot be too frequently or too deeply impressed upon our minds, that if only a name and profession, christianity has no influence. Where it is known only in word and form, it is as powerless as the dead. A stranger coming into my dwelling in the moment of sorrow, wholly unacquainted with the circumstances of my affliction, could not have less sympathy with me or less control over my feelings than religion has upon such an occasion, if my heart has never become familiar and intimate with it; if it is not my ancient and bosom friend.

Religion must be infused into the very essence of the mind. Our fashion of thought and feeling must be formed by it, and our

whole nature sublimated by its union with our best sensibilities. It must be but another name for the shape and habit which the spirit within us has assumed. All this can be accomplished only by the most patient and gradual efforts, on our part, to render religious consideration, a sense of God, and of God's unslumbering providence, a just estimate of life and its various objects of pursuit, matters of daily reflection and study. Religion must stand by us in our cradles. She must take our childhood by the hand, and summon all the vicissitudes of life to her aid. And then, when we have in this way become thoroughly imbued with the truth, our feelings regulated, and our whole characters formed by large and religious modes of thought, then no bounds can be set to the power of religion over all the changes, no matter how sudden or severe, to which we may be exposed. It is an armor which incases our whole being, without putting us under the least restraint. The fiery darts of sin cannot pierce it. They will fall quenched and broken at our feet. The blows of affliction, fall as heavily as they may, will only increase the animation of our resistance. We may weep, and our whole frames shake under

the sense of bereavement. So much must be pardoned to human nature.

But all our tears are sanctified. They burst  
From our o'ercharged hearts like blessed showers,  
Which leave the skies they come from, bright and holy.

The best and most consoling thoughts will, by the simple force of habit, come thronging into our hearts, and they will find our sensibility excited and ready to embrace them as so many messengers from the God of all consolation. And it will be impossible for us to lose our presence of mind, because a perfect understanding of our frailty and exposure is always present in our thoughts.

Let this now be remembered. Let it be established as a first truth with us, that if religion is to comfort us in affliction; if she is to give us aid in any time of peril, she must have had long and supreme command over our hearts. She must be at home in our bosoms, and then she diffuses a virtue through the whole moral frame, so that affliction cannot touch so much as the hem of our garments without being sanctified. Then her consolation abounds. In one word, it is only the religious man, that can be comforted by religion. Her language is, "I love them who love me."

w. h. f.

## **Man's Will conformed to God's Will.**

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Should it be according to thy mind? — Job.

It may be according to our mind. Ay, we may have our will. There is a way to make our desires certain of gratification; to make our enterprises all prosper; our plans all succeed; to baffle misfortune; to chain down chance and vicissitude; to abolish anxiety, and make disappointment unknown. Is there not such a way, reader? Are there not voices proclaiming it from God's word, from man's reason, from our heart's inmost depths? Would you learn this way? Then listen to these true oracles, when they declare the sovereignty of One alone; one designing mind; one controlling will, and pronounce the government of the universe inconsistent with more than one. Every where this will alone prevails. It is around us, and within us, ruling ceaselessly with unshared, irresistible dominion. This will must have sway, and none other can ever accomplish its desire, but by harmoniously coinciding with

it. This is the secret. Have your will, by moulding it according to the will of God. It will then be guided by wisdom that has never erred, and enforced by might that never has been baffled, and watched over by love that has never failed.

Otherwise, what do we? Dissatisfaction with the appointments of this higher will is an appeal from the tribunal of his wisdom to our own weak judgment. All anxiety is so much distrust of Him, who knows best in every case. All feelings of disappointment are the indication of a disposition that, if allowed full sway, would deny the benignity of his rule, and overturn his throne. Knows he what he would do, the man of peevish discontent, when he so readily complains of his lot at every trivial mishap, that he permits to sour and irritate him? He thinks, it may be, that at the worst, he is only spoiling his temper and banishing the cheerful smiles of his friends. But there is a friend above treated with worse rudeness; and every petulant exclamation that stains the lips, which he has touched with life; every angry oath that desecrates the tongue, which he has made to praise him, is directed, however unconsciously, against his holy will; and gives its

little force to the subversion of his empire, to the desolating of the universe; making it fatherless: destitute of a governing providence.

And of how much more direct unkindness to man may wilfulness unknowingly be guilty? Who can tell the mischief that might be done by one rash wish granted? Are we impatient of the almighty Father's opposition to our vain and short-sighted projects? Rather let us give thanks, that we are not allowed to witness the destructive issues, that would perhaps attend the accomplishment of the selfish scheme. It might interrupt the beneficent order of nature. It might interfere with the kindest arrangements of Providence. It might, by some of its distant consequences, bring death to ourselves; involve in ruin all who are dear to us; spread misery over the world; destroy souls.

Presume we not, therefore, to intrude into the province of the Supreme. Put we forth no audacious hand to disturb the complicated machinery of his work. But let us be satisfied his darkest ways are right; and let meek submission prompt ignorant man's most becoming prayer, "Thy will be done."

"Thy will be done." Brief but compre-

hensive prayer! Simple as the words of Jesus always were; of import more full and solemn than a cathedral's chanted litanies. Sublime summary of man's wants! It asks for all things; all things needful to make him blessed. It contains the most copious system of duty. It is the most useful body of divinity. It teaches piety and love and trust. It tells of wisdom and goodness and power on high. God's will be done. If it were done, what would there be wanting on earth or in heaven? For is it not his will alone, that makes the spirits of the just rejoice in bliss? And would he not have the spirits of all, spirits of the just?

How dear should this little petition of Jesus be to all, who long for such peace, as the vicissitudes of fortune cannot reach! How often should it be in their hearts! It may be on their lips alone, and they deceive themselves, and think the prayer earnest from the heart. Look, when overwhelming grief has bowed down the mourner's soul. The mother has lost her only child, and sinks beneath the blow; prostrate in spirit; hopeless in heart. She mechanically repeats the words of submission, that she has caught from those about her, "God's will be done;"

but they, who mark her utter and effortless abandonment to wretchedness, may see that she is yielding herself up, not to the will of God, but to despair. She is resigned, but resigned blindly to her anguish, not to the wise visitation of Him, who chasteneth for good. For then would she hear the call to her moral energies; and the meek voice of a patient spirit would respond : " It is right, it is wise, it is good, that it so should be ; while I daily pray, thy will be done, let me not murmur that it is done."

And so through gathered clouds she'd move, untouched,  
In silver purity ; and cheering, oft times,  
Their reluctant gloom.

Reader, disciple of Jesus, does the prayer our master has left us, never reproach us in repeating this clause, as if guilty of mockery toward the great searcher of hearts ? Trace that master's footsteps along his thorny path from the manger to the cross, and behold he sought nowhere his own will, but the will of the Father who sent him. And what seek we ? What is our ruling purpose in life ? To gratify stubborn wilfulness ? To accomplish only our own earth-born schemes of personal advancement ? Seek we our own will with irreligious, atheistic exclusiveness,

never thinking of that other great will, which should and must have precedence? We do so, if we have not set ourselves resolutely to the task of making the pleasure of our maker the rule of our life. Otherwise, self is the master we instinctively serve; and, strange as it may seem, it is a harder master than He will prove, whose will is only to bless us, if we will let him.

We shall invoke, then, the predominance of his will over our hearts, if we are wise. We shall strive to enthrone it over every private wish. This be our resolution. And in order to establish its habitual dominion, we shall, in frequent meditation, impress upon the mind his claim to undisputed sovereignty. One sun in the heavens: one will in the universe; a sun whose beams are light and life; a will which pervades all creation with love.

And to the further effect, that its authority may rule paramount within us, we shall likewise actively obey this will. Performing its practical requisitions, it will be easy to acquiesce in its passive inflictions.

And when it awards us a bleeding heart, we will not turn away from the kind lesson it would teach. We will not rest satisfied with the alleviations which the cold-hearted phi-

osophy of earth can minister ; but we will sound the solemn truth over and over again, in the depths of the soul, "It is the will of God ; it is the will of God ; wise and good."

And when it crowns us with joy, we shall not be thankful alone ; for simple thankfulness is paying deference to our own will ; but to gratitude for the gift we shall add complacency in the will of the giver. We shall value our happiness more for its origin in the skies. It is an expression of our Father's love.

These few rules observed will make the will of God a monarch over our desires and sentiments and thoughts. And our reward will be great. Peace will they give, not as this world giveth. There will be a quiet, praising melody, ever singing within our spirits. There will be the gladness of gentle and harmonious affections in our breasts. There will be a smile spread over the earth and the heavens to our eyes ; and the spirit of tranquil trust ever whispering in the heart, "Grieve no more ; fear no more ; your Father's will is done "

M. J. M.

A Letter to a Friend under deep Affliction.

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MY DEAR \*\*\*\*\* :

PERMIT a sincere friend to offer you his sympathies, and to condole with you in this season of deep distress. I would, if possible, say something that may assuage the anguish of your grief. Do not, I entreat you, refuse to receive consolation, nor sink under the burden which your heavenly Father has laid upon you. Do not say, "My sorrow is greater than I can bear." Pray unto God, earnestly, humbly pray, that he would sustain you and comfort you; and doubt not that your prayer will be answered. He looks upon you with tender compassion and love, and waiteth to be gracious unto you. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." "Cast your cares on him, for he careth for you." Yes, "as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear him." Let your affections draw you near to him, your best, your all-sufficient, your never-failing friend. Let him be the object of your

supreme affection, and of your unbounded trust.

That friend, who never fails the just,  
Though other friends betray their trust.

He has, indeed, grievously afflicted you. "Lover and friend has he put far from you, and your acquaintance into darkness ;" and, in deep anguish, you are ready to exclaim : "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." Your friends do indeed pity you ; but they are anxious that you should do right. Is there no danger, lest you should indulge your feelings too far ; and by abandoning yourself to despair, should not only lose the benefits, which your afflictions are designed to produce, but displease that righteous and all-perfect Being, who, in his mysterious Providence, has seen fit, once and again, to disappoint your youthful hopes ? Oh, do not, my friend, allow yourself to question, for one moment, the rectitude and wisdom and kindness — yes, the kindness of all his ways. Bow with meekness before him ; or, as it is expressed in the words of inspiration : "Humble thyself under the mighty hand of God, and he will exalt thee in due time."

I do not ask you not to weep. Religion does not require you to lay this restraint upon your feelings. Your heart would break, should you not weep. Jesus wept; and his example we may safely follow. I am sensible that you have cause to weep; that your grief is very great, almost insupportable. But do not shut your heart against the consolations of christianity. That same compassionate Saviour, who wept at the tomb of his friend, and who "hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," still lives, and his tender heart still feels for us. He feels for you, and professes you his sympathy and aid in this hour of darkness. To you, those charming words are addressed: "Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Do you not now feel your need of other supports than this world can give? Oh, then come unto Jesus; take his yoke upon you and learn of him, and you shall find rest to your soul. He will teach you how to bear your afflictions and how to improve them, so that they may be converted into blessings. Yes, one of his inspired apostles has said: "Although no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peace-

able fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." And he himself has said : " I am the resurrection and the life ; " " whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." " Sorrow not then as those who have no hope ; for if we believe," thus the apostle addresses his afflicted friends, " that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Think not of your beloved friend merely as the cold tenant of the tomb. His mortal part indeed is there ; but his spirit is not there. Dust returneth unto dust, but the spirit to God who gave it.

Let your thoughts then be directed to the world of spirits. Set your affections, which have clung, perhaps too fondly, to earthly objects, on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Remember, that one thing is needful, and let it be your first, your chief concern, to choose and to secure that good part, which cannot be taken away from you.

Your affectionate friend,

J. A.

June, 1880.

## The Dangers and Temptations of Adversity.

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The sorrow of the world worketh death.—ST. PAUL.

It is common to speak of the benefits of adversity; of its efficacy to awaken salutary thoughts and purposes; to purify and exalt the character. Nor are we perhaps saying too much when we ascribe to it some natural influence to make us better. At least, such we may be assured is the design of God in appointing it. Yet is there danger on this as well as on some other topics of religion, from unqualified or extravagant statement. It is not true that adversity always does us good; or that of itself it is a spiritual benefit. For this must depend on the improvement we make of it. Like every other condition of life, it is for our trial; and as long as life itself is probationary and we remain on this side heaven, there are no circumstances in which we can be placed, whether of joy or sorrow, which shall be free from temptation. As therefore in prosperity we are in danger from worldliness and presumption, so in our

adversity we have cause to fear lest our hearts be overcharged with grief; lest we become distrustful of the goodness of God or of the kindness of men ; and in yielding, as our natural temperament may dispose, to dark surmises, to melancholy musings, or to absorbing pleasures ; in the hardness of unbelief; in reckless despair, or the distractions of worldly pursuit, we lose the benefit which God designed in afflicting us.

The dangers of adversity vary with the natural dispositions of men. There is with some a constitutional quietness, by which they can meet trouble and joy with equal composure; a composure, indeed, which as the result of discipline and of religious principle is carefully to be cherished, for it is an ingredient of moral greatness. But as a temperament, it implies little else than mere want of feeling, and may be absolutely fatal to all improvement of God's providence. On the other hand, there are those, whose extreme susceptibility, unrestrained by religion, would make them in time the victims of their grief, did not a feverish impatience of trouble, not less a part of their natural temper than their sensibility, hurry them into cares and engagements and pleasures, that indispose them for all serious reflection.

1. In violent grief, as in all extravagance of passion, there is danger from reaction. As the fervors of religious excitement quickly subside, so do the excesses of sorrow. And perhaps, in some weariness or even disgust at our own extravagance, we seek relief from objects altogether worldly, and rashly expose ourselves to the temptations of life in precisely that state of excitement which, whether it come from joy or grief, from the ardor of devotion or of mere animal passion, all observation and experience, and all reasoning from the well-known principles of our nature, show to be equally dangerous. What our Saviour therefore, by a remarkable similitude of an evil spirit going out of a man, but entering into him with new strength and in company with others worse than himself, applies to the slave of evil habits, who having resolved to break them off, returns to them again, may prove true of the man of adversity. His last state shall be worse than the first. His affliction shall leave him worse than it found him. Because it has only excited without purifying his affections, and the means, which God appointed for his benefit, he perverts to new occasions of sin.

Here is one, for example, who had known

prosperity, but is now suffering reverses in his condition. His wealth, in which he trusted, is gone. For fulness he finds straits; and instead of a cheerful charity and a generous hospitality, which it was his delight to exercise, he is constrained to eat the bread of carefulness, and to make his family the sharers of his multiplied privations. Now who will doubt that such adversity brings with it temptation? And who, that has marked its frequent consequences, will not count him happy and worthy of praise, whose perplexities have not hardened or imbibited his spirit; have not robbed him of his kind affections, which he can no longer indulge but in good wishes; or, yet more unhappily, if they have not prevailed to corrupt his habits, and to add him to the number whom reverses of condition and lowness of spirits have sunk to the madness of intemperance.

2. Nor are troubles of another description without their dangers. Bereavement of friends, as well as loss of property, may become our tempter. It would seem, that in the very nature of this sorrow there is much to improve the heart. Yet such is our proneness to pervert good to occasions of evil, that the very sacredness and tenderness of the

affection shall become a snare. When the husband and the father is bereaved of the partner of his life; of her, not only to whom his best earthly affection was given, but on whom he reposed with a boundless confidence for the happiness of his house and the care of his children; when such a lover and friend, his trusty counsellor and the "help meet" for him, is removed; and his dwelling, once so cheerful, is made sad; and cares, of which he had known nothing because they were wisely and faithfully sustained by another, he now finds devolving upon himself; he is in danger, unless he takes to himself the armor of God, the defence of high and holy principle, first, from unworthy dejection, and then, sooner, alas! than he could believe or imagine, from the worst temptations of the world. And the man who, before death entered his chambers, was safe and happy in the consciousness of virtue and the endearments of domestic love, shall, even while his friends are mourning with him the bitterness of his bereavement and the desolations of his house, have yielded himself to the allurements and even corruptions of the world.

3. Is there no danger also, lest adversity take from us our filial confidence in God,

tempting us to dark views of his providence, and to distrust, envy, or malice against our fellow-men? This we believe is a danger peculiarly incident to reverses of fortune and to the perplexities to which we have adverted, in worldly affairs. Some afflictions men can easily endure. Sickness, in their own persons or of their dearest friends, and bereavement, even in its more aggravated forms, they are able to sustain, because such appointments they refer immediately to God, and in the spirit of submission they summon religion to their aid. But losses of property, which they think themselves justified in ascribing to others, to negligence, improvidence, or fraud, or at best to secondary causes within, as they imagine, human control, involving too a total change in their comforts and prospects, the effects of which they suffer with every hour, they are less careful to improve. They do not here acknowledge the operation of the Lord, nor consider, that this also is the work of his hand. They will not remember, that changes in the aspects of the world, affecting the success of enterprise, the vicissitudes of commerce, nay, that the wickedness of men, are ministers of God's judgments, no less than

the stormy wind and tempest, the desolating flame, or the earthquake, that fulfil his word. They find others exempted and even prosperous, who entered upon life with inferior advantages, or were pursuing the same career with themselves. And as their own resources are diminished and their social gratifications impaired; perhaps too, as they may be ready in their dejected spirits to imagine, their influence or respectability affected, they yield themselves, not to discontent only, but to envy and ill-will. They are troubled, not only at their own adversity, but at the prosperity of others. They murmur against God, and grow angry with their fellow-men. So that of all the inflictions of divine providence, there is reason to fear, that none so often fail of their gracious design; none are so seldom followed by the peaceful fruits of righteousness, as are those which affect the outward estate, reducing the affluent and honorable to obscurity or straits. Who that has witnessed, will not deprecate the ravages which adversity in this form may make upon the tempers and habits of men?

**4.** From a distempered fancy, unduly magnifying our sorrows, disposing us to think that there is something peculiar in our lot

and a more than common bitterness infused into our cup, we find another source of danger. The power of imagination on this as on other subjects is almost boundless. There is also a selfishness in grief, which, fixing attention exclusively upon our own condition, easily admits the delusion, that we of all others are the most miserable. This is specially true of troubles that are of our own creation, the fruits of an indulged and distempered fancy, and which, having no limits in reality, seem to justify an unlimited grief. But we extend the delusion to those inflictions of heaven which are of most frequent occurrence, and which we never consider unusual but when appointed to ourselves. And then, in solitude and silence, in vain musings and thankless discontent, we aggravate our calamity, and complain as if that had happened to us, which is uncommon to men. We forget how great and how bitter may be the sorrows of others; how much heaviness of heart may hide itself under a cheerful countenance; and that others may not be less troubled, but only better disciplined than we. We might remember too, how often we ourselves appear to our friends more cheerful than we are; who in their turn are thinking far less of our

afflictions than of their own. And even admitting, that at the present moment they are at ease and prosperity, who can tell through what trials they may have passed; by how many painful steps of care, perplexity, or bereaved affection, they have reached to their present enjoyments. While you are envying their condition, how know you but they are pining in secret grief, or are tormented with unutterable pains? You think them happy in the multitude of their friends, in the health, and beauty, and promise of their children. But you forget the days of mourning they have numbered, or the friends and children they have buried in the grave. Nay, at the very moment, when all to the stranger's eye is bright and joyous around them, and the cup of their prosperity seems running over, they may be grieving, in the anguish of their spirit, over disappointed affections, upbraiding consciences, or blasted hopes, for the treachery of a much-loved friend, or the profligacy of a darling child. Yes. It may not be doubted, that many a tear is shed in secret by those, whom men call happy, and many a sleepless night endured, of which the world takes no account. Not seldom does a selfish world ignorantly waste its envy, where an all-

seeing and an all-pitying God looks down with compassion.

In truth, we can never judge rightly of each other's condition. There is a fallacy in appearances, which no sagacity can detect. And if we know so little of the present griefs of others, still less can we foresee what troubles are to come upon them. We cannot imagine what destiny awaits them ; how soon their brightest prospects may be darkened, and their sun go down while it is yet day. Those reverses, which it pleased Jehovah to denounce against an unthankful people, are sometimes visited upon the dwellings of the most prosperous. "I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentations. I will darken your dwelling in the clear day ; and will make the end thereof as a bitter day." Nor are such calamities more suited to repress the presumption of the secure, than to rebuke the envy which looks on the enjoyments of others with an evil eye, and will not consider, that all that fair show of happiness may only prove a preparation for more distinguished wretchedness.

5. There is also danger from the indulgence of violent grief, not only because it is by its nature transient and easily followed by

opposite emotions, but because there is with some a disposition to rest in it, as if it were itself a virtue and the fulfilment of our whole duty in affliction. He that has wept for the loss of his friend, may imagine that he has discharged the whole duty to which God had called him ; and may even find a merit and a grace in the tenderness of emotions, which are honorable to his nature, and prove within him the prevalence of good feelings. Perhaps too he has exhibited himself, as he hopes, favorably to his friends in this part of an amiable character ; and with a strange ingenuity of vanity, ever ready to betray itself where it should least appear, he can draw from his tears and griefs some new occasion to think even better of himself than he did before. Nor is this all. For he suffers his tears and groans to perform the whole work of grace within him, and to stand in stead of all lasting improvement of his sorrow.

6. Nor may we omit, as among the worst dangers of adversity, and flowing from the same source, that of abuse of providence and of unfaithfulness to his paternal designs ; of hardening ourselves against rebuke, and thus despising the chastening of the Lord. In this is included also the danger, to which we

have adverted, from transient impressions, from resolutions forgotten ; from devotions, at first excited and earnest, but afterwards neglected or suffered to relapse into formality. If our spirits have been touched by sorrow, and our purposes of goodness have been renewed, there is extreme danger, as well as folly and weakness, in returning to the remissness, worldliness and bad habits, from which it was the very design of affliction to arouse us. For in so doing we are treacherous to ourselves ; we resist our own convictions ; we make fruitless the gracious designs of God's providence ; we reject the offered visitations of his grace, and sin against our own souls.

We need not repeat, what has been already presented in other parts of this work, of our duty to improve all adversity, as the minister of God for our good. As pupils in the school of Christ and as pilgrims in a world of trial, we must also learn to guard ourselves against its dangers, by a constant reference to the great principles of our faith ; by keeping our minds enlightened and sustained by the truth, as it is in Jesus. The best conceptions, however, we can form of the divine government, and the most humble views we can

entertain of ourselves, as needing adversity, will not alone secure to us either its instruction or its solace. We must take care amidst its temptations to maintain the simplicity, the integrity, the purity of our hearts. We must remember, that neither the number nor the intensity of our griefs will without our own self-discipline make them salutary. For we have seen, that there may be a sorrow for them, which is not after a godly sort. There may be a sorrow of unbelief, which is without hope; a sorrow which, with too much of the goodness of mankind, is like the morning cloud and the early dew, that passeth away. There may be a sorrow of affectation and show, which, except it were to be denounced as hypocrisy before God, we should only ridicule for its indescribable meanness and absurdity before men. Lastly, there may be the sorrow of despair, or of murmuring against God, charging him foolishly. And all these are but parts of that sorrow, which finds no solace in religion, and only worketh death.

F. P.

April 25, 1830.

## **Some uses of Affliction.**

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They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.—PSALM cxxvi. 6, 7.

EVERY christian admits that the trials, by which is here meant the sufferings of life, are to be ascribed directly to God as their source, and to none but him. And as every christian considers this Being as clothed with every endearing as well as every adorable attribute, he must infer that these trials, whatever may be their apparent character, are intended to subserve, and therefore must subserve wise and beneficent purposes. This conclusion we could not avoid, though in the present life we could not perceive any evidence of its truth. But in point of fact we can, in a vast majority of instances, see the connexion between these trials and gracious ends, which, in the present constitution of things, could not be secured without them.

It would not be difficult to illustrate this in

regard to adversity, as it is called, in all its forms. Thus for example the necessity of constant toil and effort, which is imposed upon most men by the weakness and imperfection of their natures, and by the constantly recurring necessities of their condition in this world, is ordinarily considered among the severe trials of life. We may wish, in the darkness of our wisdom, to be delivered from this. But upon sober reflection it will be found, that by far the greater part of the happiness of life is derived from this very source. It furnishes, and indeed renders necessary that occupation of body and mind, and that healthful series of engagements, which are "the very material of contented existence."

Those gratifications in which the mind is passive, and which pass commonly under the name of pleasures, though they are the great objects of pursuit to multitudes, are nevertheless of very little value in a just estimate of human happiness. Indeed, if life had nothing better than these to give, life would not be worth possessing. Any elaborate illustration of this remark is necessarily precluded here. But that it is substantially true may appear from the conduct of those who are placed, I had almost said by the unkindness

of Providence, above the necessity of any personal exertion for the supply of their necessities. You will see them attempting to devise uncalled for employment for themselves; creating various factitious wants; exceedingly busy with trifles; running to frivolous engagements, in the hope of running from self-weariness, and of avoiding the emptiness of their own hearts and minds.

Thus too, sudden and severe reverses, disappointments, and the privation of common and accustomed privileges and blessings, are regarded as among the dark dealings of God's providence. The spirit sinks at their approach, and few are able to bear them well. But they are fraught with salutary counsels, which continued prosperity never could impart. They teach us how many of our wants are fancied, artificial, unreal; and how few of all the things which men earnestly covet, are really necessary to human happiness. They show us what a heavy tribute we pay to vanity; what a "tax the eyes of others impose upon us;" and how numerous and importunate are the claims of unnecessary self-indulgence. They assist us in breaking unworthy habits, which may be growing into iron hardness and strength. They help us in ac-

quiring the virtues of self-restraint and enlightened self-denial, and thus aid in gaining freedom of will, the power of using our faculties to the best advantage, and of establishing ourselves in the government of ourselves.

They enable us moreover, as nothing else can, to estimate the value of our common privileges and enjoyments. We can never feel as we ought to feel, how rich and full and continuous is the stream of beneficence which God is pouring upon the world, but by a temporary interruption in its flow. It is the prisoner, after a long confinement to his lonely cell, cut off from all the ordinary engagements, companionships and sympathy of men, whose eyes have been compelled to rest upon the same objects day after day, year after year;—it is he that can best tell you what are the blessings of the common air and sun-light, and what a privilege it is to walk abroad, with none to hinder, amidst the glory and beauty of the heavens above and the earth beneath. It is the exile in a foreign land, that can give you the best interpretation of the word home. It is danger felt or feared for ourselves or others, which alone can make us realize how great and indispensable is the constant care of God. And if

we would know the priceless value of the common blessing of health, we can only learn it from the sad history of the sick-room.

In like manner, there are important uses to be derived from pain, that is, physical suffering; which is commonly considered an unmixed evil. It is often a friendly and timely admonition of wants and dangers to which we are continually exposed; and without its kind ministry in some of its forms, life could not be preserved a day. It subserves moral purposes still more important. There is a necessary and an indissoluble connexion between every improper animal indulgence and bodily pain. In every such case, it is a voice in which our outraged natures cry out for mercy, and beseech us to spare ourselves. It is a "sort of bodily conscience" that warns us of every departure from a strict and enlightened self-control, reproaches us for every deviation from its laws, and thus, in a vast variety of instances, prevents single acts of excess from becoming fixed habits.

Sickness and bereavement, at once the most frequent and desolating of our trials, are yet united with moral uses of the most practical and important kind. They have often

been pointed out, and are familiar to every serious and thoughtful spirit. The passive virtues; just views of the nature and tenure of the present life; a realizing sense of the inherent wants of the soul; a proper apprehension of our mutual dependence; and especially a soul-felt appropriation of the grand realities of christian faith;—these are among the precious instructions and results of sickness and bereavement. Indeed it may be truly said, that without their severe yet kind discipline, no character can attain its best or any very high perfection.

Without attempting any more particular developement of the specific uses which each of these trials are intended to subserve, I shall only offer two general remarks, which are common to them all.

The first is, that affliction in all its forms has a direct tendency to soften the character, and to call forth and improve all the benevolent affections. Nothing is more true than the common remark, that our own suffering is the best source of sympathy for others. And it is equally true, moreover, that affliction is the best instructor in every kind office of sympathy. It not only excites and sustains benevolent emotion, but teaches its most

soothing and fitting expression. There is,— and here the consciousness of many will answer to the sentiment,— there is an entireness and fulness of responsive feeling; a prophetic anticipation of the wants of others; a delicate mode of expressing kindness, which confers while it seemingly seeks a favor; an adaptation of language, manner, look and tone, which the heart of the sufferer recognizes and understands, but which no language can describe, no training teach, and no art imitate;—in fine, there is a balm and healing efficacy in tender offices of sympathy, which nothing but affliction can teach.

On the other hand, it is the natural tendency of prosperity to render the heart cold, and insensible to the claims of others. I say tendency, for there are some natures so genial and kind, and others so deeply imbued with the spirit of our religion, that even prosperity cannot spoil them. But still it is the natural tendency of a prosperous condition to render men thoroughly selfish, and dispose them to view every thing in reference to their own accommodation. This selfishness may be disguised in various ways, and even from themselves. It may be kept out of their view by some obvious acts of munificence, or by a

prevailingly good humor, which they mistake for a general benevolence, or by consulting occasionally the happiness of others, where this costs no personal sacrifice. But still it is a serpent that loves to lurk amidst the rich foliage, and fragrant atmosphere, and wide-spread branches, and palmy honors of a full-blown prosperity; and it does lurk there often when its presence, as has been said, is least suspected.

Affliction too creates a new bond among human hearts. In all cases, a participation in any sentiment of deep concern brings all who share it nearer together. But those who have suffered and wept together in a sorrow common to both, are thereby brought into a communion peculiarly tender, and have a language and an intercourse peculiarly their own.

Thus affliction opens new sources of sympathetic feeling. But the effect stops not here. Every emotion naturally suggests a train of others similar to itself, and this is especially true of all the softer emotions. Thus it is, that "pity is akin to love." The heart that has been once touched by deep sorrow, is thereby predisposed and prepared for the admission of all the benevolent affec-

tions. It renders it more humane, gentle, tender, more accessible to every generous affection. It makes men more considerate, more watchful against giving offence, more regardful of the feelings of others, more disposed to acts of kindness. And when, from disappointment and desolation of our hopes, or from any cause, we are made to feel the insecurity and unsatisfactoriness of present objects, has not an unwonted seriousness pervaded our spirits; have not all turbulent feelings been stilled; and humility and resignation and filial trust been inspired; those hopes and fears that range upward and onward beyond the line of time, been awakened; and a sense of God's nearness to us, and of our dependence and accountableness to Him, taken full possession of our souls? Thus it is, that affections which were first called into exercise by the loss of "things seen and temporal," lead to those which fix on "things unseen and eternal." Thus it is also, by the kind ministry of suffering, the whole character is softened and improved.

But the connexion of the harder and more active virtues with affliction is not less real. And this is the other general remark I proposed to offer. It is adversity in some of

its aspects, which alone can discover us to ourselves ; lay open what is weak and develope what is strong within us ; make known to us our own resources ; teach self-command and a just self-reliance ; free us from many vain illusions ; show us the real basis of human expectations and the true sources of human happiness ; give their proper impression to the great truths of our religion ; exhibit the power and immortality of human affections ; and impress our minds with the ineffable importance of those promises, which "lay hold on everlasting life."

Do we not here see some valuable uses o affliction ? Do not these trials reveal blessings to us which uninterrupted prosperity never could make known ? Are we not thus taught, that God designs us for something better than a mere passive earthly enjoyment ; that He loves us better than we love ourselves, and therefore consults for that higher welfare, in a better world, which we, in our ignorance and devotion to present objects, should otherwise forego ? Do we not perceive that these trials are the sources of much that is really valuable in character ; that they are necessary to fit us for that happiness which can alone meet the aspirations of the human soul,

and for which the soul was made — the joys of a meek self-approval here on earth, and an abiding hope of God's acceptance in heaven?

Thus, to adopt the beautiful allusion of the Psalmist, we are placed in this present "trial state," like the husbandman who is preparing for a future harvest. He goes forth, it may be, amidst lowering skies and chilling winds and threatening storms. The very seed he sows may be taken from the scanty store which is necessary to his subsistence. It is covered in the common earth, and for all that then appears, it is buried there only to decay. A thousand accidents may interfere to blight his hopes. "He sows in tears." But he need not despond. As surely as God is faithful, his labor shall not be lost. His trust in Providence shall not deceive him. The Lord of the harvest will watch over the buried and decaying seed. He will quicken it with new life. He will breathe into it new principles of growth. He will bid the elements go and minister to its well-being. He will watch it in its upspringing and in its progress. He will guard it from the storm, the mildew, and the frost. He will carry it forward to its maturity. He will make it multiply itself a thousand fold. Then shall the husbandman

"reap in joy." And though "he went forth weeping, bearing the precious seed, yet shall he come again with rejoicing, bringing the full sheaves with him." And thus, too, in regard to the sufferings of this probationary state, we are called often "to sow in tears;" but if we are faithful and faint not, we shall "reap in joy." And though we go forth weeping here below, bearing the precious seed of trial, yet may we look for full sheaves of that harvest, which is to be reaped hereafter in the paradise of God.

J. B.

## **Light from Darkness, and Life in Death.**

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The people which sat in darkness saw great light ; and to them  
which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.  
**MATT. iv. 16.**

CHRIST is the light of the world. The world has yet to learn how much it is indebted to Him for its light and life. It is slow to acknowledge its obligations to the clear and full revelation which he brought. It talks still of the revelations of nature, forgetting how much these themselves owe to the light of christianity. They who have been born and educated as christians are often little aware, they never can know precisely, how much the truths and influences of revelation have blended with those of nature, and become a part of their being. Our debt to the christian faith is greater than we can estimate.

Especially is this true in regard to views of suffering and death. How defective and comfortless were these views at the best, before Christ came, is known to all. With him,

doubt became assurance, and despair was raised to calm and cheerful faith. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which dwelt in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." And now hope is born, and solace and peace come to the suffering but believing spirit, in what we call natural ways. Thank God, to us they are natural. We feel, we know, that sorrows are not ends, but means. Afflictions become our helpers. Death is not only a monitor, but a revealer. And often does it reveal to us, not the power alone, but the very existence and character of the COMFORTER. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

Let us contemplate some of the most natural truths, which suffering and death bring to us.

One of the first forms of human consciousness is a sense of relationship and attachment. As children, indeed as infants, we learn that we have intimate relations to those around us, and become imperceptibly but most strongly and tenderly attached to them. The attachment is mutual, and grows with our growth until it takes hold of all the

chords, and draws in all the affections of filial and fraternal being. And then, as years advance, and the calls of life take us away from the home of our childhood, and we feel the want and the glow of new affections, other relations are formed and another home created ; more distinct in its character, because more voluntary and permanent. With this, all other relations, all affections and interests, purposes, experiences, joys and sorrows, are blended. It becomes our life. It touches every spring of our being, and is bound and swayed by all the sympathies and hopes of humanity. And when this relation has been thus cemented for years, has been nursed by all the smiles and frowns of earth and heaven, and become identified with every part and prospect and desire of life — it is *broken*. A dear child is taken from those who had never tasted sorrow, or a parent removed from those who had not thought of it as possible. The light of that home is turned to darkness ; its unutterable joy to unutterable bitterness.

Now it is the first thought, suggested by this or any of the bereavements which snap the strongest bonds, it is the inquiry unavoidably forced upon the mind — “Who hath done this ?” Who is it, that hath given us

such a life, placed us in such a world, endued us with such affections, invested us with objects to which these affections cling for existence, and then torn them away by an invisible hand, and without a word of explanation, perhaps without a sound of warning. Who is it, or what? It is either blind Fate, or a despotic and malignant Spirit, or a mysterious but benevolent Being who gives and removes in equal mercy. There is no other choice. There is no refuge or possible solution beside. And here I stand, says the sufferer, to decide which of these I can and will believe. From the first, the idea of fate or chance, my mind at once revolts. It explains nothing, but adds itself to the thousand miracles and mysteries, itself the greatest and darkest of all. From the next, the thought of a malignant despot, lifting up only to dash to the ground, encircling and filling with love only from a principle of hate and for the creation of misery — not the reason only, but the conscience and the heart turn away. The world gives no proof, no intimation of such an iron despotism or savage malignity. I see it not on any side, at the worst. I find it not in any part of my frame, nor is there in

my nature the capacity to believe it. It cannot be.

And what remains? But one conclusion, from which there is no escape. On this I am thrown by the very sufferings which rend and prostrate. These *must* come from one who loves, for all things testify that he does not and cannot hate. They must be sent in love and for good, because any other supposition involves worse contradictions; and because, in the power of these sorest afflictions, under their pressure, and as their direct result, there springs up in the soul, as multitudes have experienced, an awe, a trust, a serenity, and even a love, such as nothing else, no blessings of health, friends or uninterrupted happiness have been able or would be able to produce. How many a sufferer has said, "I know that He who so severely chastens does love. I feel it. It is not a mocker or torturer. It is a friend. It is the Father." And the rebellious child is thus subdued. The wandering son is brought back. Terrible is the discipline, but gracious the purpose, and glorious the end. Light springs from darkness.

And the reflection forced upon every spirit that is bowed by the mighty hand of God,

belongs to the sense of *accountableness*. In seasons of heavy affliction it is difficult to escape the conviction that this affliction is designed for correction. We feel that it is needed, and that great must be the weakness, if not great the sinfulness, which requires a discipline so sore, or makes a Father willing to inflict it. There must be some singular hardness, which requires an almost crushing blow to break and soften it. Not that we are thus to judge others who are afflicted, but that it is natural and almost unavoidable so to judge ourselves. We are never to measure any one's goodness or wickedness by his outward experience; scarcely can we do it by the little we see of his real conduct. Neither should we suffer ourselves to magnify our own humility, when we think or speak of our Father's chastisements as merited corrections. But the conviction itself it is difficult to escape. There is nothing more fearful in the hours of deep sorrow than the thought of the great moral purpose, the vast spiritual accountableness, which they involve. The blessings of life bring with them a solemn responsibility. But how solemn, how peculiar that, which belongs to sufferings; such as must either melt or indurate the heart on

which they fall. When the bright sky is suddenly overcast, and hopes that never feared are blasted ; when the beloved of the soul falls powerless from your agonized embrace, and the awed and stricken spirit feels as if alone in the darkening world, let it weep — it must — but let not its gushing tears leave it dry and rigid and cold. God of mercy ! inscrutable but compassionate, save us from this *greatest* of sufferings. Save us all. Thou dost afflict all. In thine own time and way, Thou comest in dread power, early or late, suddenly or gently, yet soon enough and severely enough to teach us our weakness and thy will. Let it humble us. Let it convict and convert. Let not the spirit be quenched, the spirit of might and desolation that moves upon the broken hearts of thy children. Let it not be grieved away, until its full purpose is revealed and our accountableness felt. Can aught else have more power, or such power, to move the soul ? O let that dark messenger who visits house after house and strikes the lightest and the hardest heart, not merely be gazed upon in amazement, grief and stupor ; but allowed, yea, invited and helped to utter his whole message and perform speedily his benevolent mission. Let death be swal-

lowed up in the victory, not only of faith and submission, but of humility and penitence, increased piety, and a true spirituality.

The reflections that throng the excited or subdued mind in seasons of trial, are not all painful. None are of unmixed pain, where there is any power of christian faith. Many there are of settled though chastened delight. Faith itself, we all know, is nurtured by trial. It seems often indeed to be born of sorrow, and reared, strengthened, perfected, by the woes of separation, the anguish of bereavement. It is common to say this, at least. But is it not also common to doubt if not to deride the doctrine? To many it seems fanciful, to many feigned, and to few even of believers does it appear to have disclosed its whole truth. Yet are we confident, there are few truths more sure, none more consoling or convincing. With those who are led to note particularly the effect of different events on different minds, it is matter of frequent observation, that affliction does that for the growth of faith, which all other influences fail to do. Not always nor so often as it should, but as often, comparatively, that we look and hope for this, where there is little other ground of hope. When death and darkness come, men

learn, if not before, what their nature is ; to what it is exposed, and by what sustained ; what it needs and craves. More than this, they then find that the future is not so remote, nor eternity all strange and unreal. The future and eternity are made sure. They are brought close around them. Their own relation to them is revealed. Their portion in them is seen and felt. They have an interest there now. They have treasure there. A part of themselves is there. The parent who gave them being, the brother or sister who shared that being, the child who was all their own—is there—and *they* are there also. Their nature, all their affections were reposed, wrapped in these objects, and you cannot, no power can, change, death, worlds cannot, sever them wholly. Their very removal to an unknown state makes that state known. Their flight into the distant and dark future illumines that future. The angel of death who bore the loved away, opened the heavens as he ascended—and now the eye of faith penetrates, the heart of faith lives in that spiritual world. There is sorrow and trembling yet. But there is hope, the anchor of the soul. There is faith, the very substance of things hoped for, the evi-

dence of things not seen. There is prayer and communion, the soul's pinions, on which it soars to the bright presence of the spirits it here loved, the Saviour whom it trusts, the Father in whom it dwells. From the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up. It is the light of God's countenance, and it irradiates the features, the souls with which we have long been familiar, with which we may now live for ever.

“ Is not the dream of heaven more sweet,  
 Bright with those living forms of love ?  
 Does not each trial that we meet,  
 Raise our wrapt spirits more above ?

“ Yes : death, that pales our curdling cheek,  
 Tells of an angel's opening bliss ;  
 Again we view the form we seek,  
 Bright with immortal happiness.”

E. B. H.

## The Spirit's Song of Consolation.\*

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DEAR parents, grieve no more for me,  
My parents, grieve no more !  
Believe that I am happier far  
Than even with you before.  
I 've left a world where wo and sin  
Swell onward as a river,  
And gained a world where I shall rest  
In peace and joy for ever.

Our Father bade me come to him,  
He gently bade me come,  
And he has made his heavenly house  
My dwelling-place and home ;  
On that best day of all the seven,  
Which saw the Saviour rise,  
I heard the voice you could not hear,  
Which called me to the skies.

I saw too, what you could not see,  
Two beauteous angels stand ;  
They smiling stood and looked at me,  
And beckoned with their hand ;

\* This song, first written for the Youth's Keepsake, is supposed to be addressed by the departed spirit of a boy to his parents, who had lost two other children before him.

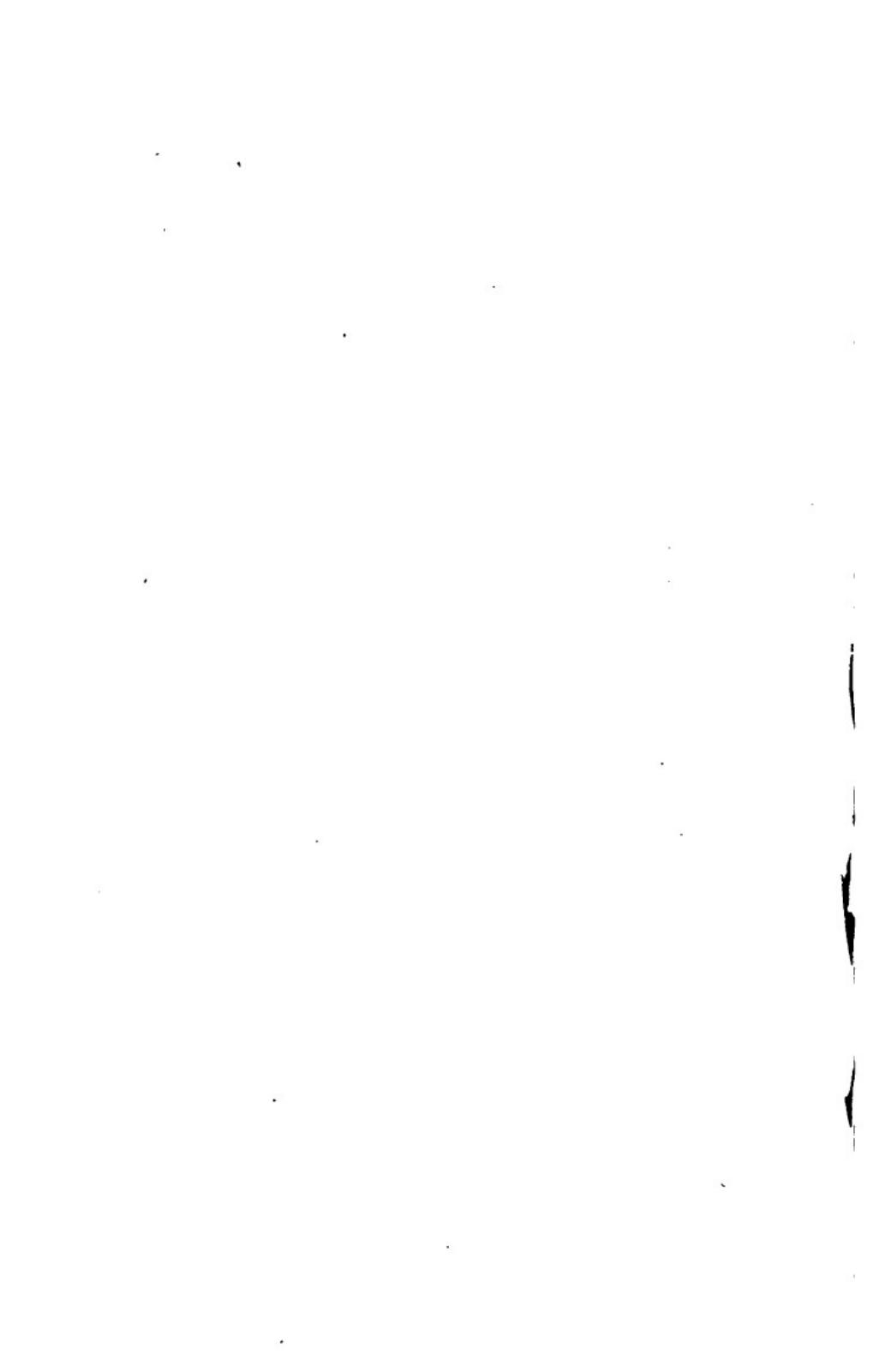
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They said they were my sisters dear,  
And they were sent to bear  
My spirit to their blest abode,  
To live for ever there.

Then think not of the mournful time  
When I resigned my breath,  
Nor of the place where I was laid,  
The gloomy house of death :  
But think of that high world, where I  
No more shall suffer pain ;  
And of the time when all of us  
In heaven shall meet again.

F. W. P. G.

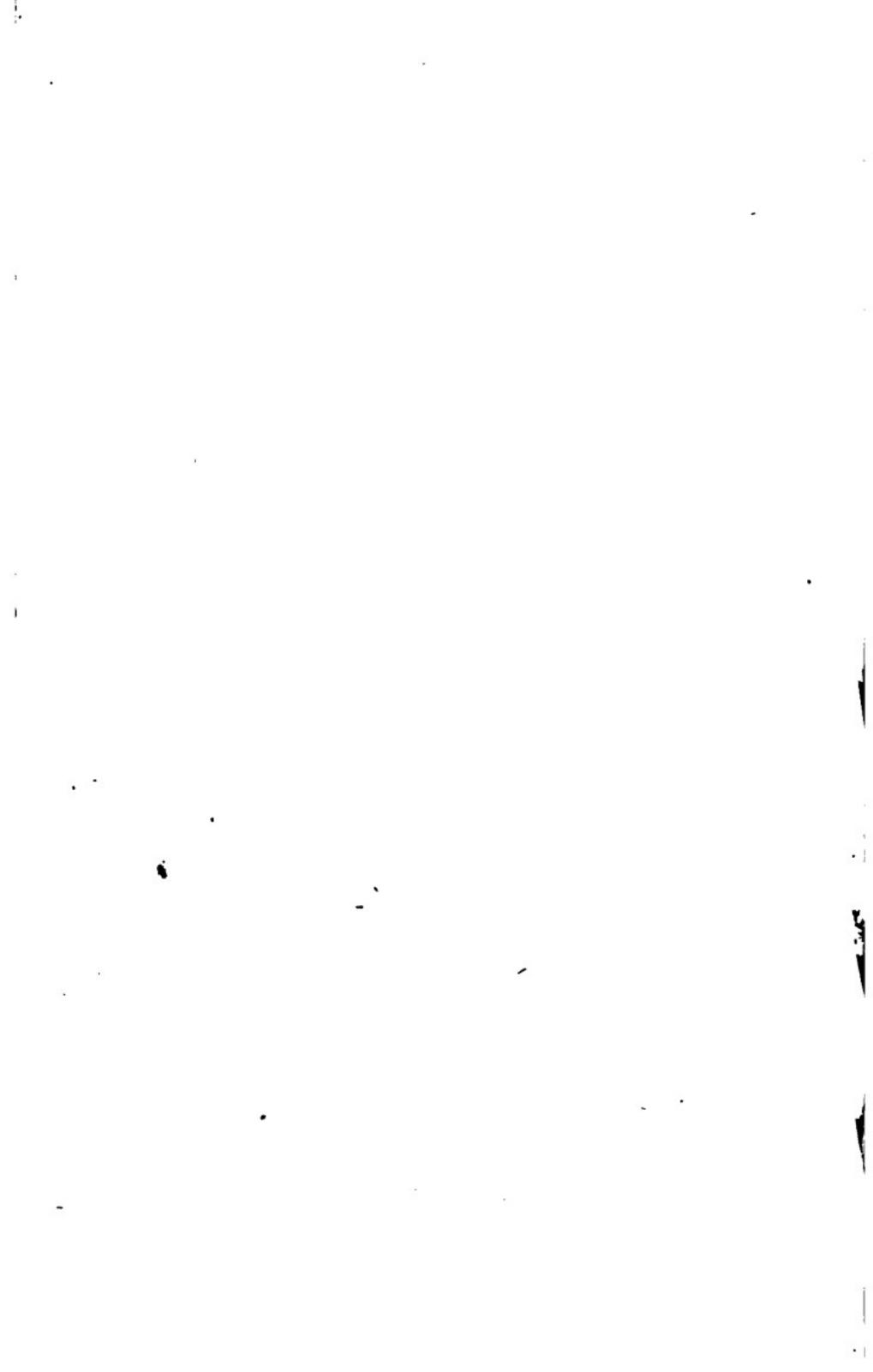
## 17



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## A P P E N D I X .

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## A P P E N D I X.

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To the original pieces, of which this little work is composed, are here added a few passages, chiefly from writers of celebrity, and composed either under circumstances of severe personal affliction, or for the consolation of their friends in bereavement. The number of such selections might be greatly extended. In the few however to which the compiler has preferred to confine himself, he is happy in uniting the names of authors, whose speculations on other subjects might widely differ from each other and his own ; not only as the passages in themselves will be found unexceptionable — most of them indeed are entitled to a higher character — but as a pleasing evidence, that in the sacred offices of consolation, as in any work of practical utility, christians of different names and parties may cordially unite. In casting his eye over the collections which, however defective, have been made for this purpose, he could not but perceive, how little have the subjects of a disputed theology to do with the work of consolation ; how much they are overlooked, even by those who on other points would deem it necessary to press them as essential to an acceptable faith. The beautiful little piece by Dr. Wardlaw of Edinburgh, after the death of his child, and the truly christian letter of Dr. Balfour, a late eminent clergyman of Glasgow —

for both of which the writer is indebted to the kindness of a friend — with the address of Mr. Danforth to his flock after the loss of three of his children, may be taken as an evidence, if any such were wanted, that when the heart is truly touched, and the best affections are in their genuine exercise, the doubtful things of religion are involuntarily forgotten. And through the "darkness and the shadows," that rest upon them, the soul of the afflicted and the spirit of the "son of consolation," whatever may be their diversities of speculation, ascend together and at once to the pure heaven of truth, even to those grand but simple principles, which it is the glory of the gospel to reveal ; and which, to every sincere believer and every submissive sufferer, are their only assurance of the hope full of immortality. Of such truths as these,—the paternal character of God, and of his, perfect providence ; the mission of Christ Jesus as the resurrection and the life ; and the glorious doctrine of immortality,—we may say as did the earnest disciple to his Lord, in words already illustrated : "To whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

The reader will remark, that most of the extracts in this selection are with particular reference to that form of bereavement, for which it has been a leading object of this book to supply consolation, the deaths of children. May they help those who are thus afflicted to remember, that

They are not lost,  
Who leave their parents for the calm of heaven.

F. P.

## Memoirs of John Evelyn, Esq.

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Extract from the Diary of John Evelyn, Esq.,\* recording the deaths of a promising son and daughter.

" Jan. 27, 1658.—After six fits of a quartan ague, with which it pleased God to visit him, died my dear son Richard, to our inexpressible grief and affliction, five years and three days old only ; but at that tender age a prodigy for wit and understanding; for beauty of body, a very angel; for endowment of mind, of incredible and rare hopes. To give only a little taste of some of them, and there-

\* John Evelyn, Esq., the author of "Sylva," was a gentleman of distinguished character and influence in the reign of Charles II, and of the two subsequent reigns. He was in habits of close intimacy with the most distinguished individuals of his time, both in church and in state ; the friend, as may be seen, of Dr. Jeremy Taylor, and was held in high esteem, not only for his fine taste and elegant accomplishments, but for his piety and irreproachable manners. In his journal, he records with much feeling and interest his domestic history, as well as the great public events of his day. The two children, whose death he so tenderly laments, must indeed have been remarkable for their early endowments and virtues. And though something may be allowed to the fondness of parental affection, yet no one, we believe, can read the little history he has given of them, without some emotions of sympathy for a parent thus bereaved.

by give glory to God, who out of the mouths of babes and infants does sometimes perfect his praises. At two years and a half old, he could perfectly read any of the English, Latin, French, or Gothic letters, pronouncing the three first languages exactly. He had before the fifth year, or in that year, not only skill to read most written hands, but to decline all the words, conjugate the verbs regular, and most of the irregular. Strange was his apt and ingenious application of fables and words, for he had read *Aesop*; he had a wonderful disposition to mathematics, having by heart divers propositions in Euclid, that were read to him in play, and he would make lines and demonstrate them.

"As to his piety, astonishing were his applications of scripture upon occasion, and his sense of God. He had learnt all his catechism early, and understood the historical parts of the Bible and New Testament, to a wonder. These, and the like illuminations, far exceeding his age and experience, considering the prettiness of his address and behavior, cannot but leave impressions in me at the memory of him. He would of himself select the most pathetic Psalms, and chapters out of Job, to read to his maid during his sickness, telling

her, when she pitied him, that all God's children must suffer affliction. How thankfully would he receive admonition ; how soon be reconciled ; how indifferent and yet how cheerful ! He would give grave advice to his brother John ; bear with his impertinences, and say he was but a child. If he heard of, or saw any new thing, he was unquiet till he was told how it was made ; he brought to us all such difficulties as he found in books, to be expounded. He was all life, all prettiness ; far from morose, sullen, or childish in any thing he said or did.

"The day before he died, he called to me, and in a more serious manner than usual, told me that for all I loved him so dearly, I should give my house, land, and all my fine things to his brother Jack ; he should have none of them. And next morning, when he found himself ill, and that I persuaded him to keep his hands in bed, he demanded whether he might pray to God with his hands unjoined ; and a little after, whilst in great agony, whether he should not offend God by using his holy name so often, calling for ease. So early knowledge ; so much piety and perfection ! But thus God, having dressed up a saint fit for himself, would not longer permit

him with us, unworthy of the future fruits of this incomparable, hopeful blossom. Such a child I never saw; for such a child I bless God in whose bosom he is! May I and mine become as this little child, who now follows the child Jesus, that Lamb of God, in a white robe whithersoever he goes. Even so, Father! Thou gavest him to us. Thou hast taken him from us, blessed be the name of the Lord! That I had any thing acceptable to Thee was from thy grace alone, since from me he had nothing but sin, but that Thou hast pardoned, blessed be my God for ever. Amen!

“ Feb. 25 — Came Dr. Jeremy Taylor, and my brothers, with other friends, to visit and condole with us.”

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“ March 4th, 1685.—My daughter Mary was taken with the small pox, and there was soon found no hope of her recovery. A very great affliction to me; but God’s holy will be done.

“ March 10th.—She received the holy sacrament. After which, disposing herself to suffer what God should determine to inflict, she bore the remainder of her sickness with

extraordinary patience and piety, and more than ordinary resignation and blessed frame of mind. She died the 14th, to our unspeakable sorrow and affliction ; and not to ours only, but that of all who knew her, who were many of the best quality, greatest and most virtuous persons.

"The justness of her stature, person, comeliness of countenance, gracefulness of motion, unaffected, though more than ordinarily beautiful, were the least of her ornaments, compared with those of her mind. She had an excellent voice ; the sweetness of which, and happy management of it, added such an agreeableness to her countenance, without any constraint or concern, that when she sung it was as charming to the eye as to the ear ; and this I the rather note, because it was a universal remark, and for which many noble and judicious persons in music desired to hear her. What shall I say, or rather not say, of the cheerfulness and agreeableness of her humor ? condescending to the meanest servant in the family, she still kept up respect without the least pride. She would often read to them, examine, instruct, and pray with them if they were sick, so as she was exceedingly beloved of every body. Piety

was so prevalent an ingredient in her constitution, (as I may say,) that even amongst equals and superiors, she was no sooner become intimately acquainted, but she would endeavor to improve them by insinuating something of religion, and that tended to bring them to a love of devotion. She abhorred flattery; and though she had abundance of wit, the raillery was so innocent and ingenuous, that it was most agreeable. She danced with the greatest grace I had ever seen; but she seldom showed that perfection, save in the gracefulness of her carriage, which was with an air of sprightly modesty, not easy to be described. There was nothing affected, but natural and easy in her whole discourse, to which the extraordinary sweetness of her tone, even in familiar speaking, was very charming. Nothing was so pretty as her descending to play with little children, whom she would caress and humor with great delight. But she most affected to be with grave and sober men, of whom she might learn something, and improve herself. I have been assisted by her in reading and praying by me; comprehensive of uncommon notions; curious of knowing every thing to some excess, had I not sometimes repressed

it. Nothing was so delightful to her as to go into my study, where she would willingly have spent whole days; for, as I said, she had read abundance of history, all the best poets, even Terence, Plautus, Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid; and could herself compose happily. But all these are vain trifles to the virtues that adorned her soul. She was sincerely religious; most dutiful to her parents, whom she loved with an affection tempered with great esteem, so as we were easy and free, and never so well pleased as when she was with us; nor needed we other conversation. She was kind to her sisters, and was ever improving them by her constant course of piety. O dear, sweet, and desirable child! how shall I part with all this goodness and virtue, without the bitterness of sorrow and reluctance of a tender parent! Thy affection, duty and love to me was that of a friend, as well as of a child. Nor less dear to thy mother, whose example and tender care of thee was unparalleled; nor was thy return to her less conspicuous. Oh! how desolate hast thou left us! To the grave shall we both carry thy memory.

“God alone, in whose bosom thou art at rest and happy, give us to resign thee and all our

contentments, (for thou wert indeed all in this world,) to his blessed pleasure. Let him be glorified by our submission ; and may He give us grace to bless him for the graces he implanted in thee, thy virtuous life, thy pious and holy death, which is indeed the only comfort of our souls."

## **Letter of Condolence by Dr. Jeremy Taylor.**

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[Besides the deaths of his daughter Mary, and his son Richard, Mr. Evelyn was afflicted by the loss of another promising boy, named George. To console him under this and other domestic afflictions, his faithful friend frequently visited him, and addressed to him a letter, "which," says Bishop Heber, in his life of Taylor, "who is there, that would forgive my omitting?" We select here a few passages.]

**TO JOHN EVELYN, ESQ.**

"Deare Sir,— If dividing and sharing griefs were like the cutting of rivers, I dare say you would find your stream much abated. For I account myself to have a great cause of sorrow, not only in the diminution of the numbers of your joys and hopes, but in the loss of that pretty person, your strangely hopeful boy. I cannot tell all my own sorrows without adding to yours :— and I can no otherwise comfort you but by telling you, that you have very great cause to mourn. But remember, sir, your two boys are two bright starres, and their innocence is secured, and you shall never hear evil of them again. Their state is safe, and heaven is given to

them upon very easy termes, nothing but to be borne and die. It will cost you more trouble to get where they are: and amongst other things, one of the hardnesses will be, that you must overcome even this just and reasonable grief. And indeed, though the grief hath but too reasonable a cause, yet it is much more reasonable, that you should master it. For doe but consider what you would have suffered for their interest: you would have suffered them to goe from you to be great princes in a strange country: and if you can be content to suffer your owne inconvenience for their interest, you command your worthiest love, and the question of mourning is at an end. But you have said and done well, when you look upon it as a rod of God; and he that so smites here will spare hereafter. Sir, if you doe not look to it, time will snatch your honor from you, and reproach you for not effecting that by christian philosophy, which time will doe alone. And if you consider, that of the bravest men in the world, we find the seldomest stories of their children, and the apostles had none, and thousands of the worthiest persons, that sound most in story, died childless;— you will find it is a rare act of Providence so to impose upon worthy men a ne-

cessity of perpetuating their names by worthy actions, and discourses, governments and reasonings. If the breach be never repaired, it is because God does not see it fit to be; and if you will be of his mind, it will be much the better. Sir, now you have an opportunity of serving God by passive graces. Strive to be an example and a comfort to your lady, and by your wise counsel and comfort stand in the breaches of your own family, and let them see, that God never displeases you, as long as the main stake is preserved, — I meane your hopes and confidence of heaven. Sir, I shall pray for all that you can want, and shall always do you honor, and faine also would do you service, if it were in the power, as it is also in the affection of,

Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate and  
obliged friend and servant,

JER. TAYLOR.

Feb. 17, 1658.

Again, in a letter during the sickness of still another child of Evelyn, he thus writes :

“ SIR, I doe really beare a share in your fears and your sorrowes for your deare boy. I doe and shall pray to God for him; but I

know not what to say in such things. If God intend, by these clouds, to convey him and you to brighter graces and more illustrious glories, I dare not with too much passion speak against the so great good of a person that is so deare to me and a child that is so deare to you. But I hope, that God will do what is best ; and I humbly beg of him to choose what is that best for you both."

Taylor himself, as we learn from the interesting life of him by Bishop Heber, had frequent need of the consolations he so skilfully and kindly imparted to his friends. He was severely tried by the ill-conduct, as well as by the loss of some of his children. The eldest, who was in the king's service, fell in a duel with a brother officer, who also died of his wounds. The second, Charles, was intended for the church. "But his views of life," says Heber, "and it would seem his conduct also did not correspond with his father's hopes and example. He became the favorite companion of the profligate Villiers, duke of Buckingham, and died in early life of a decline, a little before his father's decease, in 1667. Of the loss of one of his youngest children a few years before, this ex-

emplary sufferer thus writes to the same faithful friend :

“ Deare Sir,— I am in some little disorder by reason of the death of a little child of mine, a boy that lately made us very glad, but now he rejoices in his little orbe, while we thinke, and sigh, and long to be as safe as he is.”

**Roger Ascham's Letter to his Wife, on the  
Death of their Child.**

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[**ROGER ASCHAM** was married in 1554. This letter was probably written within a few years afterwards; nearly three hundred years ago.]

**MINE OWN SWEET MARGARET:**

THE more I think upon our sweet babe,—as I do many times both day and night,—the greater cause I always find of giving thanks continually to God for his singular goodness bestowed at this time upon the child, you, and me; even because it hath the rather pleased him to take the child to himself into heaven, than to leave it here with us still on earth. When I mused on the matter as nature, flesh, and fatherly fantasies did carry me, I found nothing but sorrows and care, which very much did vex and trouble me. But at the last, forsaking these worldly thoughts, and referring me wholly to the will and order of God in the matter, I found such a change, such a cause of joy, such a plenty of God's grace toward the child, and of his

goodness toward you and me, as neither my heart can comprehend all, nor yet my tongue express the twentieth part thereof. Nevertheless, because God and good-will hath so joined you and me together, as we must be not only the one comfort to the other in sorrow, but also full partakers together in any joy, I could not but declare unto you what just cause I think both we two have of comfort, gladness and joy, that God hath so graciously dealt with us as he hath.

My first step from care to comfort was this : I thought God had done his will with our child ; and because God, of his wisdom, knoweth what is best, and by his goodness ever will do best, I was by and by fully persuaded the best that can be done is done with our child. But seeing God's wisdom is unsearchable with any man's heart, and God's goodness unspeakable with any man's tongue, I will come down from such high thoughts, and talk more sensibly with you, and lay before you such matter as may be both a full comfort of all our cares past, and also a just cause of rejoicing as long as we live. You well remember we did talk how to bring up our child in learning and virtue; we had care to provide for it, so as honest fortune should

favor and follow it. And see, sweet Margaret, how mercifully God hath dealt with us in all these points; for, what wish could desire, what prayer could crave, what nature could perform, what virtue could deserve, what fortune could offer, we have received, and our child doth enjoy already. And because our desire (thanked be God!) was always joined with honesty, and our prayers mingled with fear, and appliant always to the will and pleasure of God, God hath given us more than we wished, and that which is better for us now than we could think upon then.

But ye desire to hear and know how? Marry, even thus. It hath pleased God to make us vessels to increase heaven; which is the greatest honor to man, and the greatest joy to heaven, that any man can imagine.

Secondarily. When Nature had performed that she could, Grace stepped forth, and took our child from Nature, and gave it such gifts over and above the power of Nature, as, where it could not creep on earth by nature, it was made straightway well able to go to heaven by grace. It could not then speak by nature, and now it doth praise God by grace. And yet thanked be Nature that she hath done all that she could do; and blessed be Grace that

hath done much better than we could wish she should do. Peradventure yet you do wish that Nature had kept it from sickness, and had preserved it from death a little longer. Yea, but grace hath carried it where now no sickness can follow it, nor any death hereafter meddle with it; and instead of a short life with long troubles on earth, it doth now live a life which shall never have end, with all inward joy in heaven. And now, Margaret, go to; I pray you tell me, and tell me as you think; — do you love your sweet babe so little, do you envy his happy state so much, yea once to wish that nature should rather have followed your pleasure in keeping your child in this miserable world, than grace should have purchased such profit for your child, in bringing him to such felicity in heaven?

Thirdly. You may say unto me: " Yet if the child had lived in this world, it might have grown to such goodness by grace and virtue, as might have turned to great comfort to us, to good service to our country, and afterward to have deserved as high a place in heaven as it doth now." Sweet Margaret, you say truth, and I believe also it should so have done. But when I consider the dangerous passage through this world, the slip-

pery way that youth hath to walk in ; when I see by experience, how many children, by their frowardness, be rather a care than a comfort to their parents, and how that number is fewest that groweth to most goodness, I quiet myself with God's doing and pleasure, who hath given to our child already the sure and certain reward of virtue, and hath not left him to the danger of loss of such benefits.

And yet see how marvellously God hath wrought the matter. In Holy Scripture the life of man is commonly likened to two things : in one place it is called a continual warfare upon earth ; in another place it is called a running for the best game. Now, what dangerous enemies doth man's life fight withal ! Even the Devil, the world, and the flesh. O Lord ! how few overcome all these three ! How many fight faintly ; how many fight not at all ; yea, how many will fully forsake the banner of God, and with might follow the Devil, the world, and the flesh ! It is fearful, Margaret, to hear of this battle ; but more fearful to enter into it ; and therefore most joyful to be delivered from it. Again, all must run, that purpose to win the game. Yet how slow be we to run ; many scarce willing to go ; more ready to sit down

and not stir ; and most turning a quite contrary way both from God and his calling. But how hath God dealt with our child for this dangerous battle and this slippery way ? Even so as I cannot tell whether his wisdom is more marvellous, or his goodness more merciful, and whether you and I are more bound to praise him for his wisdom, or always to thank him for his goodness. For he hath given our child the victory without fighting, and the garland without running. He hath given unto him the reward of virtue, before he could either do or think upon virtue ; and therefore, Margaret, ought we two justly to say, " Thy goodness, O Lord, is partial toward our child and us ; and therefore let us also willingly confess and thankfully praise God with David, ' Blessed be thou for ever and ever, O merciful God ! who hast not dealt thus with all nations and people.' "

Fourthly and lastly. Seeing grace hath purchased more by his death, than nature could have promised by his life ; seeing mercy hath freely so rewarded him in heaven as no virtue of itself can deserve on earth ; surely, Margaret, we might bewail the want of fortune, the last point in order I had to talk upon. For if we understand good fortune, as

men do understand it, the best way it is to grow great in this world by honesty and good order; yet the state of it in this world is so unstable as no man of wisdom hath ever trusted to.

## Letter of Sir William Temple.

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Extract from Sir William Temple's letter to Lady Essex, reprobating her excessive grief for the loss of her daughter.

" YET after all, madam, I think your loss so great, and some measure of your grief so deserved, that would all your passionate complaints, all the anguish of your heart, do any thing to retrieve it; could tears water the lovely plant, so as to make it grow again after once it is cut down; would sighs furnish new breath, or could it draw life and spirits from the wasting of yours, I am sure your friends would be so far from accusing your passion, that they would encourage it as much and share it as deep as they could. But, alas! the eternal laws of the creation extinguish all such hopes, forbid all such designs. Nature gives us many children and friends to take them away, but takes none away to give them us again. And this makes the excesses of grief to have been so universally condemned as a thing unnatural, because so much in vain; whereas nature, they say, does nothing

in vain ; as a thing so unreasonable, because so contrary to our own designs ; for we all design to be well, and at ease, and by grief we make ourselves ill of imaginary wounds, and raise ourselves troubles most properly out of the dust, whilst our ravings and complaints are but like arrows shot up into the air at no mark, and so to no purpose, but only to fall back upon our heads, and destroy ourselves, instead of recovering or revenging our friends.

All the precepts of christianity agree to teach and command us to moderate our passions, to temper our affections towards all things below ; to be thankful for the possession, and patient under the loss, whenever He, that gave it, shall see fit to take away. Your extreme fondness was, perhaps, as displeasing to God before, as now your extreme affliction ; and your loss may have been a punishment for your faults in the manner of enjoying what you had. Submission is the only way of reasoning between a creature and its Maker ; and contentment in his will is the greatest duty we can pretend to, and the best remedy we can apply to all our misfortunes."

## A Christian Mother on the Death of a Darling Child.

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THERE was the parting sigh ;  
With that the spirit fled,  
And winged its flight on high,  
And left the body dead.  
No prayers, no tears, its flight could stay ;  
'T was Jesus called the soul away.

Oh, how shall I complain  
Of him who rules above ;  
Who sends no needless pain ;  
Who always smites in love ;  
Who looks in tend'rest pity down,  
E'en when he seems to wear a frown ?

The eye of Jesus wept,  
It dropt a holy tear,  
When Mary's brother "slept,"  
A friend to Jesus dear.  
Delightful thought ! that blessed eye,  
Still beams with kindness in the sky.

I know my babe is blest,  
Her bliss by Jesus given ;  
She's early gone to rest,  
She's found an early heaven ;  
The sigh that closed her eyes on earth,  
Was signal of her happier birth.

But oh, my spirits fail,  
 I feel a pang untold —  
 Those ruby lips so pale !  
 That blushing cheek so cold !  
 And dim those eyes of “ dewy light,”  
 That smiled and glanced so sweetly bright.

To lay that darling form,  
 So lovely e'en in death,  
 Food for corruption's worm,  
 The mould'ring earth beneath !  
 Oh, worse to me than twice to part ;  
 Than second death-stroke to my heart !

As summer-flower she grew  
 Expanding to the morn,  
 All gemm'd with sparkling dew,  
 A flower without a thorn,  
 A mother's sweet and lovely flower,  
 Sweeter and lovelier every hour.

But ah ! my morning bloom  
 Scarce felt the warming ray ;  
 An unexpected gloom  
 Obscured the rising day ;  
 A dreary, cold, and with'ring blast,  
 Low on the ground its beauties cast.

Its glist'ning leaves are shed,  
 That spread so fresh and fair ;  
 The balmy fragrance fled,  
 That scented all the air ;  
 And lowly laid its lifeless form,  
 The gentle victim of the storm.

But why in anguish weep ?  
 Hope beams upon my view,  
 'T is but a winter's sleep,  
 My flowers shall spring anew ;  
 Each darling flower in earth that sleeps,  
 O'er which fond mem'ry hangs and weeps !—

All to new life shall rise,  
 In heavenly beauty bright,  
 Shall charm my ravished eyes,  
 In tint of rainbow light;  
 Shall bloom unfading in the skies,  
 And drink the dews of Paradise !

Oh, this is blest relief!  
 My fainting heart it cheers ;  
 It cools my burning grief,  
 And sweetens all my tears ;  
 These eyes shall see my darling then,  
 Nor shed a parting tear again.

And while my bleeding heart  
 Laments for comforts gone,  
 I only mourn a part,—  
 I am not left alone ;  
 Though nipt some buds of opening joy,  
 How many still my thanks employ !

And thou ! my second heart,  
 Loved partner of my grief,  
 Heaven bids not thee depart,  
 Of earthly joys the chief ;  
 A favored wife and mother still,  
 Let grateful praise my bosom fill !

RALPH WARDLAW.

Edinburgh.

## **Is it well with the Child ?**

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Is it well with the child? And she answered, it is well.\*

**THAT** it is well with children when they die, we know. We will then inquire what are the designs of Providence in calling children away from their parents' arms.

I think, that you cannot possibly imagine more than two reasons why children are thus called away. The first is, to save them from the evils of the world. Far be it from me to represent this life as a vale of tears, or as a place where the miserable outnumber the happy. I know that it is not so, and that the great proportion of the earth's inhabitants want not the power but the disposition to be happy. Still, time and chance happen to them all; and if you look upon those who started together in life, with high hopes and bounding

\* The passages, which follow, are taken from a discourse delivered by Rev. W. B. O. Peabody, to his society in Springfield, at a season of unusual anxiety and sorrow; and is addressed both to those who have suffered, and to those who are apprehending the loss of children.

steps, you find some who are soon bent down with suffering, while others keep on successfully to the last. You find some, who midway in life, are wasted with disease, which breaks off all the purposes of life and sinks them slowly and heavily to the grave. You find some, who, without any fault of their own, are thrown into a condition in life, in which they have every thing to endure, with no hope of any thing better in this world. You see the man with the crown of rejoicing taken from his head ; you see the aged moving alone, unsupported and uncared for to the tomb. Such destinies in life there are ; and such might have been the portion of the child who perished yesterday, to-day, or the one that should die to-morrow. If so, the parent should thank God, who hides it from the evil, even though He hides it in the grave.

But these which I have named are not the worst evils of life. This is a world of sin. They who come forward to bear a part in it, meet a thousand various temptations ; and there are too many who yield to them and fall. The generous and high-minded youth sometimes becomes a cold, selfish and unfeeling man ; the man who used to look the world in the face, becomes base and dishonorable,

and either frowns in savage defiance, or looks down with shame. They who were loved for their kind hearts, become slaves to their vices which make them a burden and sorrow to their friends ; and very often, those whom the world accuses of no vices, are yet entirely destitute of moral principles and religious affections. If it might have been the fate of your child to sink into any one of these snares ; if there were the least danger of his becoming an alien from heaven, and self-outcast from God, what parent would not rejoice to have his child taken to a better world before it becomes deeply stained with the corruption of this ? You should bless the hand that throws open the door of escape, even if it is the door of the grave.

No parent feels as if her child could ever have become a slave to corruption, but God knows ; and if it is not to save them from the evils of life, that they are taken away, it must be for the second reason ; — to place them in a condition more favorable to their improvement than this world affords.

I fear that the future life is so imperfectly realized, that this consolation loses most of its power. Why will men persist in thinking of heaven as a place of unmeaning rest, of in-

dolent happiness, where the soul finds nothing but still and deep repose? They ought to reflect, that repose is not happiness to the mind, and that the enjoyment they dream of is rather stagnation than repose. It is a state wholly unsuited to the nature of man. They ought to think of heaven as a place where every power of every mind shall be steadily, successfully, and therefore happily exerted; where every affection of every heart shall be deeply interested, and therefore fully blessed. What the employment of that state will be, we know so far as this, it must be the employment of mind, in such researches as to give the highest happiness, in discovering the manifestations of the glory and goodness of God. To think of heaven as we do, affords no comfort, no attraction; it is like the long yellow line of a desert, seen by mariners who are looking for green hills and valleys as they draw near the shore; when, would they imagine it as a place where all are active, interested and happy, they would feel that when their child is gone to that world, there are some there, who will watch the flower, as it unfolds the beauty of its promise, and spreads out to the Sun of Righteousness its leaves, from which the dew of youth will never dry.

Think thus of heaven, and it will be something real and substantial to offer the mourning heart. It is evidently a region more favorable to the growth of the immortal nature than this world. For, though in this world there are trials and hardships, which serve to discipline some spirits, and in this way to form them for heaven, there are other spirits perhaps, which are comparatively pure, and do not need them; which are gentle, and could not bear them; which could not endure the rough climate of this world, but can grow and flourish divinely in the milder air of heaven. Such spirits, it is but reasonable to suppose, are translated, because heaven is better for them than earth; and God in his mercy places every soul in the state, whatever it may be, which is most favorable to its growth in excellence. In our Father's house there are many mansions; and all are open to the innocent as well as the just.

This accounts for the fact which has been so often observed, that many children of the brightest promise are removed from this world. A fact I have no doubt it is; though parents naturally esteem their own children too highly, and the lost are often the most loved, without being the best; still, it has

been remarked from the earliest ages, that early death is given to the favorites of heaven. And why should it not be so? If there is a better world, for which they are better fitted than for this, why should we wish to detain them here? why should we lament when the heavenly spirit ascends to its home in the skies? The parents should be ready to give up their child to a father, who has more right to its presence and affection than they; and, assured that "of such is the kingdom of heaven," they should feel, that the hour cannot be untimely, which numbers it with the cherubim and all the radiant spirits round the throne.

## Letter of Rev. Dr. Balfour.

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A letter from Rev. Dr. Balfour, a clergyman of Glasgow, to his friends, after the death of his only son, who died while on a visit to their house.\*

"Glasgow, August, 1786.

SIR :

I BEG you will let me know particularly how you and Mrs. Dennison are. I can say with truth, that from the moment of receiving the severe shock, an anxiety about you all hath mixed itself with almost all tears and prayers on my account. If my intended visit is on any account, or in any way, disagreeable, fully tell me, for nothing is more remote from my mind, than giving the least pain to any one of you. So far am I from looking with an evil eye at ——, as the

\* The Rev. Dr. Balfour, who lately deceased at Glasgow, was for many years one of the most eminent divines of the church of Scotland. The occasion of this excellent letter was the death of his only son, who was drowned during a visit to some friends in the country, while bathing in company with a son of their own, who escaped. The tenderness and generous consideration, expressed for his friends under such circumstances, seems to us scarcely less admirable than the truly christian submission, which it displays.

cause of my distress, the loss of my dear boy appears to be attended with many alleviating circumstances, which probably could not have been the case any where else. The time, the divinely appointed time, was come for his removal from the tender embraces of a fond parent. And since this was the divine will, I dare not say unkind, or unjust, of his and my Father in heaven, I adore and bless his name for enabling me to acquiesce with perfect satisfaction in his sovereign will. I knew this high and unsearchable will of God took effect amidst all that immediate attention, which a parent's eye, a parent's hand, a parent's breast could have thought of for his safety. Instead, therefore, of one reflection, I now most sincerely give, and if able, will in person give, with my whole heart, the most grateful acknowledgements to you, and all about your house, for flying to the instant relief of my perishing child; that lady first. And the good God, who frustrated all these kind and friendly endeavors, which I shall never forget, has taught me, and will teach you, "he does all things well," "according to the counsel of his own will." I greatly feel for the deep distress it has brought upon

you, and worthy Mrs. Dennison, because you participate so much in my sorrow.

I wish now, my dear friend, to set before you some of the consolations, which have relieved my otherwise sorrowful spirit. The God, who has visited me with this sore calamity, has, I assure you, been to me a "God of all comfort." When afflictions abound, his consolations are made much more to abound. He hath comforted me by fixing my attention on his divine perfections; his glorious, gracious character, design, and relations. I see there can be no error, or rashness in any part of infinite wisdom; nor cruelty, nor unkindness in the intention of Him, who is righteous, and good, and merciful.

I hope that you, Mrs. Dennison, will not be afraid to meet me. I shall endeavor to comfort you with the consolations, which are in Jesus Christ. They are strong, everlasting; and when the streams of worldly comfort are dried up, whither should we go but to the comforts of divine love and faith? This is a fountain, which pours forth its gracious influence, adapted to all our situations. This dispensation is to teach us the vanity of this life, and the temporary nature of all

earthly joy. What is this world, with all its riches, honors, pleasures and connexions, without God for ever? What, with his blessed presence, can we want, that is good for us? "Though our house be not so with God, he hath made with us an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." We may well add, "This is all our salvation and all our desire," and with the prophet Habakkuk, "Although the fig tree should not blossom, yet we will rejoice in the God of our salvation." Oh, how divine is that religion, that presents such truths to the mind; how solacing are its comforts! Let us look forward to the bright morning of the resurrection, which will turn all our sorrow into joy. Then shall our companions in the faith and patience of Jesus Christ appear with him in glory. How wondrously changed their forms! No more corruption; no more tendency to disease or death; no possibility of any future separation; shining forth in all the perfections of unfading beauty, spotless purity, and immortal honor. The unfolded mystery of redemption, and the glory of their Saviour, will open, and show them such resplendent surveys of grace and greatness, as shall more

than satisfy them with regard to past events. The most overwhelming and confounding, will fill them with eternal admiration. I trust you will not be offended at the freedom and earnestness, with which a friend, more than ever concerned for your best interests, has written.

Be assured, I sincerely wish for you health, prosperity, and every good thing."

## **Extract from a Sermon of Rev. Dr. Barnes.\***

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Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, oh ye, my friends, for  
the hand of God hath touched me.—Job.

“WHAT happened to pious Job, in part, hath happened to me. My first and only daughter is dead. As many of you had some acquaintance with her, and know that I have no daughter left to help me under the infirmities of age, I am sure of all the compassion I can reasonably expect. I have friends to comfort me in the hour of trouble.

No inconsiderable part of my business through life has been to administer consolation to the afflicted. How well I have done it, I must leave to others to determine. God is my witness, that in this part of my work I have been sincere; and, generally speaking, my words have been well accepted. My visits have been agreeable to me, because they appeared to be so to others. The time

\* Dr. Barnes was a clergyman of considerable repute in Scituate, Mass.; and the discourse from which this affecting passage is taken, was preached after the funeral of an only daughter.

is now come, when I stand in need of that consolation, I have given to others. My beloved people appear ready and disposed to mingle their tears with mine. I am full in the belief that my daughter, so much beloved by me, lived beloved by others. I think she had not an enemy in the world. If she had, I know not the person, nor do I wish to know; and as she lived beloved, so I have reason to think she died lamented. What adds much to my support in my trouble, is the strong hope I have that she is gone to a better world. She was not unhappy in this, but she might be more happy in another: to that she is gone, and there I leave her; I shall soon follow her. Could she have staid, to help me finish a long life that is fast declining, it would have been exceedingly agreeable. But this is a favor which my God, for wise reasons, thought it best not to grant.

My life is more solitary than it was. It is best that I should be weaned from the world, before I am called to leave it. God has taken the most effectual way to do it. I do not complain. I have friends left, and hope I always shall have. We will weep together. I am not childless; I have a son to comfort me, as good as I could wish. I leave my grand-

children in good hands ; they are unknown to you, and perhaps always will be ; let them have an interest in your prayers. To give a character of my beloved daughter belongs not to me Her acquaintance want none ; her life speaks for itself ; let her works praise her ; and her husband and children rise up, as they will, and call her blessed. The will of God is done, and we will all say, Amen."

**Speech of the Rev. Samuel Danforth at the  
Grave of three of his Children.\***

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**"MY FRIENDS :**

If any, that see my grief, should say unto me, as the Danites unto Micah, What aileth thee? I thank God I cannot answer, as he did, They have taken away my gods. My heart was indeed somewhat set upon my children, especially the eldest; but they were none of my gods, none of my portion; my portion is whole and untouched unto this day.

\* The Rev. Samuel Danforth was one of the early ministers of Roxbury, and was for many years a colleague with the venerable Eliot, justly celebrated among the worthies of New England, and as the "Apostle of the Indians." The affliction, which called forth this touching address to his sympathising parishioners, is thus mentioned by Cotton Mather in his "Magnalia."

"In December, 1659, the (hitherto unknown) malady of croup invaded and removed many children. By opening of one of them the malady and remedy, though too late for very many, were discovered. Among those many that thereby expired, were the three children of the Rev. Mr. S. Danforth, the eldest of whom, being upwards of five years, was remarkably intelligent and pious. How the sorrowful father entertained this solemn providence may be partly gathered from what he expressed unto such as came to attend his branches unto their graves."

I trust the Lord hath done what he hath done, in wisdom and faithfulness and dear love; and that in taking these pleasant things from me, he exercises and expresses as tender affection unto me, as I now express towards them, in mourning for the loss of them. My desire is, that none may be over much dismayed at what hath befallen us; and let no man by any means be offended. Who may say to the Lord, "What doest thou?" I can say from my heart, though what is come upon us is very dreadful and amazing, yet I consent unto the will of God, that it is good. Doth not the goldsmith cast his metal into the furnace? and you, husbandmen, do you not cause the flail to pass over your grain, not that you hate your wheat, but that you desire pure bread?

You know, that nine years since, I was in a desolate condition; without father, without mother, without wife, without children. But, what a father, and mother, and wife, have been bestowed upon me, and are still continued, though my children are removed! And above all, though I cannot deny but that it pierceth my very heart, to call to remembrance the voices of my dear children, calling father, father!—a voice now not heard—yet I

bless God, it doth far more soundly refresh and rejoice me, to hear the Lord continually calling unto me, " My son, my son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art corrected of him." And blessed be God, that doth not despise the affliction of the afflicted, nor hide his face from him. It was the consideration, that God had sanctified and glorified himself, by striking a holy awe and dread of his majesty into the hearts of his people, that made Aaron hold his peace ; and if the Lord will glorify himself by my family, by these awful strokes upon me, quickening parents unto their duty, and awakening their children to seek after the Lord, I shall desire to be content, though my name be cut off. And I beseech you, be earnest with the Lord for us, that he would keep us from sinning against him, and that he would teach us to sanctify his name ; and though our branches have forsaken us, yet that he, who hath promised to be with his children in six troubles, and in seven, would not forsake us. My heart truly would be consumed, and would even die within me, but that the good will of Him who dwelt in the burning bush, and his good word of promise, are my trust and stay."

## **James Hay Beattie.**

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**Extracts from the "Life and Character of James Hay Beattie,"  
by his father, James Beattie, LL. D.**

**"November 28, 1790.—I INTEND to write  
a short account of the life, education and  
character of my son, now deceased. It will  
innocently, and perhaps not unprofitably,  
amuse some hours of this melancholy season,  
when my mind can settle on nothing else. In  
order to convey a favorable notion of the per-  
son of whom I speak, I have nothing to do  
but to tell the simple truth.**

**To parents, and other near relations, in-  
fancy is very interesting ; but can hardly sup-  
ply any thing of narrative. My son's was in  
no respect remarkable, unless perhaps for a  
mildness and docility of nature, which ad-  
hered to him through life. I do not remem-  
ber, that I ever had occasion to reprove him  
above three or four times ; bodily chastise-  
ment he never experienced at all. It would  
indeed have been most unreasonable to apply  
this mode of discipline to one, whose supreme**

concern it ever was to know his duty, and to do it.

The first rules of morality I taught him were, to speak truth, and keep a secret; and I never found that in a single instance he transgressed either.

The doctrines of religion I wished to impress on his mind, as soon as it might be prepared to receive them; but I did not see the propriety of making him commit to memory theological sentences, or any sentences, which it was not possible for him to understand. And I was desirous to make a trial how far his own reason would go in tracing out, with a little direction, the great and first principle of all religion, the being of God.

In general company, indeed, he was (though not awkward,) modest to a degree that bordered on bashfulness; and so silent, that some people would have thought him inattentive. But nothing escaped his observation; though what he had observed he never applied to any improper purpose. And I have known, not any other person of his, and very few persons of any age, who with so penetrating an eye discerned the characters of men. I, who knew his opinions on all subjects, do not remember any instance of his being in this respect mis-

taken. Yet so careful was he to avoid giving offence, that none but a few of his most intimate friends knew that he had such a talent.

In the end of June, 1790, a cough made its appearance; and it was then I began to lose hopes of his recovery, as I have reason to think he also did; he saw death approaching, and met it with his usual calmness and resignation. "How pleasant a medicine is christianity!" he said one evening, while he was expecting the physician, whom he had sent for, in the belief that he was just going to expire. Sometimes he would endeavor to reconcile my mind to the thought of parting with him; but, for fear of giving me pain, spoke seldom and sparingly on that subject. His composure he retained, as well as the full use of his rational faculties, to the last; nor did his wit and humor forsake him, till he was no longer able to smile, or even to speak, except in a whisper.

One day, long before the little incident last mentioned, when I was sitting by him, soon after our second return from sea, he began to speak in very affectionate terms, as he often did, of what he called my goodness to him. I begged him to drop that subject; and was proceeding to tell him, that I had never done

any thing for him but what duty required and inclination prompted; and that, for the little I had done, his filial piety and other virtues were to me more than a sufficient recompence,—when he interrupted me, (which he was not apt to do,) and, starting up, with inexpressible fervor and solemnity, implored the blessing of God upon me. His look, at that moment, though I shall never forget it, I can describe in no other way than by saying, that it seemed to have in it something more than human, and what I may, not very improperly perhaps, call angelic. Seeing me agitated, he expressed concern at what he had done, and said that, whatever might be in his mind, he would not any more put my feelings to so severe a trial. Sometimes, however, warm sentiments of gratitude would break from him; and those were the only occasions on which, during the whole course of his illness, he was observed to shed tears, till the day before his death, when he desired to see his brother, gave him his blessing, wept over him, and bade him farewell.

As his life drew towards a close, his pains abated considerably, and he passed a good deal of time in sleep. When I asked him whether his dreams were distressing, he said,

"No; for he sometimes dreamed of walking with me, which was an idea peculiarly soothing to his mind."

At seven in the morning of the nineteenth of November, 1790, he said his throat was dry, and desired a draught to be given him. Mr. Wilson stepped to the table to fetch it: but before he got back to the bed-side, the last breath was emitted, without a groan, or even a sigh.

I have lost the pleasantest, and, for the last four or five years of his short life, one of the most instructive companions, that ever man was delighted with.\* But, "the Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." I adore the Author of all good, who gave him grace to lead such a life, and die such a death, as makes it impossible for a christian to doubt of his having entered upon the inheritance of a happy immortality."

\* The loss of this, and soon after, of another, and his only surviving son, Montagu, deeply affected the mind of Dr. Beattie. He bore indeed these great trials with an exemplary piety; but they weighed upon his spirits, and even produced a temporary loss of memory respecting them. His accomplished biographer, Sir William Forbes, relates the following most touching incident, concerning the younger son: "Many times his father could not recollect what had become of him; and, after searching in every room of the house, he would say to his niece, "You may think it strange, but I must ask you if I have a son, and where he is." — *Life of Dr. Beattie*, vol. iii.

## Bereaved Parents Consoled.

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"The springs of comfort opened in the Gospel;" extracted from an affectionate address, by John Thornton.

**READER**, do you lament a son or a daughter torn from your tender embrace? Have immediate recourse to the volume of inspiration. There you will not fail to find topics of the deepest interest, and themes of potent efficacy to assuage your pain and revive your spirit.

You look with intense interest on the remains of that dear child, reposing in the coffin, or you fondly call up its image when those remains rest in the silent grave. But are you so enamoured of the casket as to forget the precious jewel? Does the frail tenement of clay so engross your thoughts as to render you unmindful of the now emancipated and blessed inhabitant? The spark of intelligence, which animated your beloved child, will continue to burn and shine when the natural sun shall be extinguished. In the world of spirits every injurious bar, every

chilling blast, every cause of distraction or discouragement, will be entirely removed. There the immortal mind will unfold and exert its noble faculties with a freedom and delight unknown to the boldest and the brightest genius on earth.

That such as die in childhood are admitted into the regions of immortal glory, is a point so clear, as scarcely to require an argument. "It is not the will of your heavenly Father, that one of these little ones should perish." This is the language of the compassionate Saviour, referring to the universal Father, whose tender mercies are over all his works. They are the words of Him, who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The doctrine he has here taught us is replete with heavenly consolation. We need only look to Christ with a steady eye, and contemplate the excellency of his character, the faithfulness of his truth, and the riches of his mercy, to find a tranquillity, which is above all price.

### **Examples of Suffering.**

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MOTIVES to resignation may be drawn from the spirit and conduct of good men placed in similar circumstances of trial. Some of God's sincere servants have lost their children under awfully severe circumstances, and yet have meekly bowed to the stroke of the divine hand. A more severe calamity, a more overwhelming judgment can hardly be conceived, than that, which fell upon Aaron, or Eli, or the venerable patriarch Job. Yet were these humbled parents silent and submissive. No frantic cries, no bitter complaints, no fretful murmurs, escaped their lips. Doubtless their hearts were pierced with the keenest pangs; but they owned and adored the justice of a righteous God. Compare your trial with theirs, and you will see many circumstances of alleviation, which you had perhaps overlooked.

Octavia, the sister of the emperor Augustus, was said to be greatly distinguished for

her virtues and accomplishments. But the untimely death of her son Marcellus threw her into a state of depression and despair, from which she never recovered. The anecdote, recorded by Servius of the effect upon her of Virgil's beautiful lines in commemoration of that lamented youth, is highly characteristic of a mother's feelings. When the poet, reciting them in her presence, came to the name of Marcellus, so artfully supplied to make the close and climax of the passage, Octavia fainted away. On her recovery she gave a most munificent present to him, who had consecrated to her sorrows so noble an effort of his genius. She survived the loss twelve years, the whole of which she spent in mourning, receiving no consolation from her other children, though nobly allied, and the mothers of flourishing families, but remained plunged in darkness and solitude. Had she possessed the solace and support of true religion, her exquisite sensibility would have been tempered with patience, and turned into the course of active duty.

The far-famed Cicero lost all self-command, when his favorite daughter Tullia was torn from him by the hand of death. In vain did his friends labor to assuage his anguish.

In vain did they refer him to that philosophy, which he had so often himself recommended as the best guide and comforter of man. He gave himself up to the violence of sorrow : and was so infatuated as to form the project of erecting a temple to Tullia, and worshipping her as a goddess.

As a contrast to the instances here given, I will adduce an example from a better school. How unreasonable and extravagant does the conduct of Octavia appear, compared with that of the viscountess Falkland, when placed in like circumstances. This christian lady lost a son in the blooming spring of life, who was just beginning to manifest the most brilliant talents and amiable dispositions. She keenly felt the rending stroke, and yet kissed the rod in the hand of her heavenly Father. After mourning during the day, and by night watering her couch with tears, she would check herself, and say, "Ah ! this immoderate sorrow must be repented of, these tears wept over again." Her fear of displeasing God allayed the violence of grief. She betook herself to the Bible and to the throne of grace ; she listened to the kind counsel of her worthy pastor and of faithful friends, and like Hannah of old, exchanged gloom and

perturbation for cheerfulness and serenity. It is true, the fits of maternal agony returned again and again, but the same divine consolation healed her wounded spirit. She resolved, that her precious time should not be wasted in useless regrets. She turned her attention to domestic duties, and to the various plans of active benevolence. And thus she became an illustrious pattern of self-command and self-denial, of submission to God, and of love to man.

## **Letter to Walter Scott on the Death of the Duchess of Buccleuch.**

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[“THE following letter was addressed to Sir Walter Scott by the Duke of Buccleuch soon after the death of his wife. I present it here,” says Mr. Lockhart in his interesting life of his father-in-law, “because it will give a more exact notion of what Scott’s relations with his noble patron really were, than any other single document, which I could produce. But I am not ashamed to confess that I embrace with satisfaction the opportunity of thus offering to the readers of the present time a most instructive lesson. They will here see what pure and simple virtues and humble piety may be cultivated as the only sources of real comfort in this world and consolation in the prospect of futurity,—among circles which the giddy and envious mob are apt to regard as intoxicated with the pomps and vanities of wealth and rank; which so many of our popular writers represent systematically as sunk in selfish indulgence—as viewing all below them with apathy and indifference—and last, not least, as upholding, when they do uphold, the religious institutions of their country, merely because they have been taught to believe that their own hereditary privileges and possessions derive security from the prevalence of Christian maxims and feelings among the mass of the people.”]

**TO WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.**

Bowhill, September 3, 1814.

**MY DEAR SIR :**

IT is not with the view of distressing you with my griefs, in order to relieve my own feelings, that I address you at this moment.

But knowing your attachment to myself, and more particularly the real affection which you bore to my poor wife, I thought that a few lines from me would be acceptable, both to explain the state of my mind at present, and to mention a few circumstances connected with that melancholy event.

I am calm and resigned. The blow was so severe that it stunned me, and I did not feel that agony of mind which might have been expected. I now see the full extent of my misfortune; but that extended view of it has come gradually upon me. I am fully aware, how imperative it is upon me to exert myself to the utmost on account of my children. I must not depress their spirits by a display of my own melancholy feelings. I have many new duties to perform, or rather, perhaps, I now feel more pressingly the obligation of duties which the unceasing exertions of my poor wife rendered less necessary, or induced me to attend to with less than sufficient accuracy. I have been taught a severe lesson; it may and ought to be a useful one. I feel that my lot, though a hard one, is accompanied by many alleviations denied to others. I have a numerous family, thank God, in health, and profiting, accord-

ing to their different ages, by the admirable lessons they have been taught. My daughter Anne, worthy of so excellent a mother, exerts herself to the utmost to supply her place, and has displayed a fortitude and strength of mind beyond her years, and, as I had foolishly thought, beyond her powers. I have most kind friends, willing and ready to afford me every assistance. These are my worldly comforts, and they are numerous and great.

Painful as it may be, I cannot reconcile it to myself to be totally silent as to the last scene of this cruel tragedy. As she had lived, so she died—an example of every noble feeling—of love, attachment, and the total want of every thing selfish. Endeavoring to the last to conceal her suffering, she evinced a fortitude, a resignation, a Christian courage, beyond all power of description. Her last injunction was to attend to her poor people. It was a dreadful but instructive moment. I have learned that the most truly heroic spirit may be lodged in the tenderest and the gentlest breast. Need I tell *you* that she expired in the full hope and expectation, nay, in the firmest certainty of passing to a better world, through a steady reliance on her Saviour? If ever there was a proof of

the efficacy of our religion in moments of the deepest affliction, and in the hour of death, it was exemplified in her conduct. But I will no longer dwell upon a subject which must be painful to you. Knowing her sincere friendship for you, I have thought it would give you pleasure, though a melancholy one, to hear from me that her last moments were such as to be envied by every lover of virtue, piety, and genuine religion.

Yours very sincerely,

BUCCLEUCH, &c.

## A Letter on the Death of a favorite Daughter.

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[The following letter was written by DUGAL BUCHANNAN,\* an obscure peasant, who lived in the Highlands of Scotland, to a respectable citizen of Edinburgh, upon hearing of the death of one of his daughters, who was deservedly dear to himself and his family.

We select only a few passages of this letter. The elevated and pious sentiments it expresses will be found an ample apology for the plainness of its style.]

TO MR. H———.

DEAR SIR:

I RECEIVED a letter from Mr. T. acquainting me with the death of your daughter, Jane. How it affected me, I cannot so well describe as Mr. T. has done. What an alleviating circumstance is it in your trial, that you have

\* The author of this letter, during a visit he once paid to the city of Edinburgh, went upon business into the house of a gentleman, in whose parlor he saw a bust of Shakespeare, in alto relief, with the following lines inscribed under it :

"The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherits shall dissolve,  
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a wreck behind."

The gentleman, perceiving Mr. Buchannan's eyes attracted by these lines, asked him, if he had ever read any thing equal to

no reason to mourn as those who have no hope. Imagine, then, you hear your dear departed child adopting the language of her Redeemer, and saying, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I am gone to the Father." But how backward are our hearts to this duty of rejoicing! Our passions often get the better of our understanding as well as our faith; and our memories, which are treacherous enough on other occasions, are ever faithful here; and by cruelly mustering up all the amiable qualities of our departed friends in a long succession, open our wounds to bleed afresh. Nay, our imagination is set at work, and stuffs up their empty garments in their former shape, when we miss them at bed or board. It is truly surprising, that when our understandings and judgments are fully convinced of the equity of God's ways, and that his whole paths are not only truth but mercy to such as fear him, that it has so little influence in silencing the inward murmurs of our souls. Instead therefore of por-

them in sublimity—"Yes, I have," said Mr. B., "the following passage in the book of Revelations is much more sublime—" "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them." (Rev. xx. 11.) "You are right," said the gentleman, "I never saw the sublimity of that passage before."

ing over our wounds, and refusing to be comforted, we should endeavor to acquire the blessed art of letting our faith trace out our friends in the regions of bliss and immortality; where, to use Milton's words, "they walk with God—high in salvation, and the climes of bliss." Our Lord once entered into Jerusalem with a grand retinue, and he had a demand for an ass to ride upon, that he might fulfil an ancient prophecy concerning himself. A messenger was despatched for the ass; and if the owner refused him, he had positive orders to tell him, that "the Lord had need of him." If your heart complains that your child was too soon loosed from you, saying, why was my dear child so suddenly snatched from me, in the bloom of youth, when I expected she should be the comfort of my old age, and soothe my pains and distress? Why, the same answer stands on record for you, "the Lord hath need of her." He had need of more virgins in his train, and your dear child was pitched upon. Therefore rejoice in her honor and happiness. Our Lord hath gone to heaven to prepare mansions for his people, and he sends his spirit to prepare his people for their mansions; that they may be fit to act agreeably to the great end of their calling, and to fill their thrones

to the honor of that God, who hath called them to glory and honor. He then crowns them with endless happiness. Some have a longer time of probation than others. The great dresser of God's vineyard knows best when to transplant his fruit-bearing trees. We ought, therefore, always to acquiesce in his wisdom. And why should you or Mrs. H. who rejoiced at her first birth, mourn at her being admitted into the number of the spirits of the just made perfect, when it is certain that many who rejoiced with you at her birth, hailed her arrival on the coasts of bliss. Among those who rejoiced with you at her first birth, and saluted her on the heavenly, we may safely mention Mr. and Mrs. P. and others of your pious relations and neighbors, who have got crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, since her first birth. But I see that this subject would lead me beyond the bounds of a letter. May the Lord bless your remaining children, and preserve them to be the comfort of your age; and form them to be vessels of honor, fit for the Master's use. I have only to add, that from my very soul I sympathize with you, and the rest of your dear family, in your loss, which is her gain and glory. Yours,

D. BUCHANNAN.

To ———, on the Death of a Young Child.

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SWEET child ! that wasted form,  
That pale and mournful brow,  
O'er which thy long, dark tresses  
In shadowy beauty flow—  
That eye, whence soul is darting  
With such strange brilliancy,  
Tell us thou art departing—  
This world is not for thee.

No ! not for thee is woven  
That wreath of joy and wo,  
That crown of thorns and flowers  
Which all must wear below.  
We bend in anguish o'er thee,  
Yet feel that thou art blest,  
Loved one ! so early summoned  
To enter into rest.

Soon shall thy bright young spirit  
From earth's cold chains be free,  
Soon shalt thou meet that Saviour  
Who gave himself for thee.  
Soon shalt thou be rejoicing,  
Unsullied as thou art,  
In the blest vision promised  
Unto the pure in heart.

Yes ! thou art going home,  
Our Father's face to see  
In perfect bliss and glory ;  
But we, oh ! where are we !

While that celestial country  
Thick clouds and darkness hide,  
In a strange land of exile,  
Still, still must we abide.

O Father of our spirits,  
We can but look to thee!  
Though chastened, not forsaken,  
Shall we, thy children be.  
We take the cup of sorrow,  
As did thy blessed son,  
Teach us to say with Jesus,  
“Thy will, not ours be done.”

## **Religious Consolation.**

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[From a discourse by the Rev. R. Morehead, preached during the prevalence of a fatal epidemic in Edinburgh, and particularly among the young children of his flock.]

"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and great mourning ; Rachel weeping for her children."

TO A PARENT the very circumstances, which render his child of little value to others, are the most attractive. It is his delight to retire from the serious cares and busy occupations of men, into the unanxious scenes of childish playfulness ; to repose his thoughts upon some countenances, on which the world has left no traces of care, and vice has impressed no marks of disorder ; and to find within his own house, and sprung from his own loins some forms, which recall the image of primæval innocence, and anticipate the society of heaven. When these innocent beings are torn from us, we suffer a calamity with which a stranger, indeed, will imperfectly sympathize, but of which the heart knoweth the bitterness ; and the sorrow may only be the

deeper and more heartfelt, that it must be disguised and smothered from an unpitying world.

To such sorrows of the heart it is the office of Religion to apply the words of consolation; and when the first tumults of grief are at an end, to inspire the soul of the mourner with loftier sentiments. She suggests, that in the kingdom of God there is no loss of existence; that the hand of infinite wisdom changes, indeed, the sphere of action, in which the rational soul is destined to move, but never deprives him of the being which the hand of beneficence bestowed. She points to a higher world, in which the inhabitants are as little children; and she hesitates not to affirm that the soul of infant innocence finds its way to that region of purity, the air of which it seemed to breathe while yet below. She speaks here with a voice of confidence, which may sometimes fail to be inspired even from the contemplation of a long life spent in the practice of virtue. The best men have contracted many failings in the course of their earthly trial; and when we commit their bodies to the dust, while Religion calls upon us to look forward to their destiny with holy hope, she yet permits

some foreboding fears to cloud the brightness of the prospect. In less favorable cases, all that we can do is to withdraw our minds from the vices of the departed, and rather to fix them with apprehension and purposes of amendment upon our own; to raise our thoughts at the same time to the perfect goodness of God, who seeth the secret springs of the heart, and judgeth not as man judges; which will forgive whatever can be forgiven, and which hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

But when we follow to the grave the body of untried innocence, we at the same time restore to the Father of spirits the soul, which he gave, yet unpolluted by the vices of time, and still an inmate meet for eternity. When the tears of nature are over, faith may look up with an unclouded eye, and see the Saviour, whose descent upon earth cost so many tears to the mothers of Bethlehem, now speaking comfort to the mothers of his people, and telling them, that he, who here below 'suffered little children to come unto him,' still delights to throw around them the arms of his love, when, like him, they have burst the bonds of mortality.

We are well aware of the influence of the world. We know how strongly it engages our thoughts, and debases the springs of our actions; and how important it is to have the spirit of our minds renewed, and the rust, which gathers over them cleared away. One of the principal advantages, perhaps, which arises from the possession of children, is, that in their society the simplicity of our nature is constantly recalled to our view; and that when we return from the cares and thoughts of the world into our domestic circle, we behold beings, whose happiness springs from no false estimates of worldly good, but from the benevolent instincts of nature. The same moral advantage is often derived in a yet greater degree from the memory of those children, that have left us. Their simple characters dwell upon our minds with a deeper impression. Their least actions return to our thoughts with more force than if we had it still in our power to witness them; and they return to us clothed in that saintly garb which belongs to the possessors of a higher existence. We feel, that there is now a link connecting us with a purer and a better scene of being; that a part of ourselves has gone

before us into the bosom of God; and that the same happy creature, which here on earth showed us the simple sources from which happiness springs, now hovers over us, and scatters from its wings the graces and beatitudes of eternity.

To you, then, who have suffered the visitations of Providence, Religion unfolds the sources of consolation and improvement. She calls upon you to give the children, of whom you have been deprived, into the hands of your and their Father, and when the first pangs of affliction are over, to lift up your thoughts with that faith towards Him, which may at least enable you to meet them in his presence forever. Yet while she calls you not to mourn, she does not ask you to forget. You should remember whatever may contribute to your purity and virtue. You should sometimes meditate with holy emotion on those angel forms, which are gone before you; and, amidst the temptations of the world, you should call to mind, that their eyes are even now impending over you, and feel the additional link, which binds you to the higher distinction of your being.

## To a Dying Infant.

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SLEEP, little baby ! sleep !  
Not in the cradle bed,  
Not on thy mother's breast  
Henceforth shall be thy rest,  
But with the quiet dead.

I 've seen thee in thy beauty,  
A thing all health and glee ;  
But never then wert thou  
So beautiful as now,  
Darling ! thou seem'st to me.

Mount up, immortal essence !  
Young spirit ! haste, depart—  
And is this death ! — dread thing !  
If such thy visiting,  
How beautiful thou art !

Oh ! I could gaze for ever  
Upon that waxen face ;  
So passionless ! so pure !  
The little shrine was sure  
An angel's dwelling place.

God took thee in his mercy,  
A lamb untask'd, untried ;  
He fought the fight for thee,  
He won the victory,  
And thou art sanctified !

I look around, and see  
The evil ways of men ;  
And oh ! beloved child !  
I 'm more than reconciled  
To thy departure then.

Now, like a dew-drop shrined  
Within a crystal stone,  
Thou 'rt safe in heaven, my dove !  
Safe with the source of love,  
The Everlasting One.

## To William.\*

It seems but yesterday my love, thy little heart beat high ;  
And I had almost scorned the voice that told me thou must die.  
I saw thee move with active bound ; with spirits wild and free,  
And infant grace and beauty gave their glorious charm to thee.

Far on the sunny plains, I saw thy sparkling footsteps fly,  
Firm, light, and graceful as the bird that cleaves the morning  
sky ;  
And often as the playful breeze waved back thy shining hair,  
Thy cheek displayed the red rose tint that health had painted  
there.

And then in all my thoughtfulness, I could not but rejoice,  
To hear upon the morning wind the music of thy voice,—  
Now echoing in the rapturous laugh, now sad almost to tears ;  
'T was like the sounds I used to hear, in old and happier years !

Thanks for that memory to thee, my little lovely boy ;  
That memory of my youthful bliss, which time would fain do-  
stroy.

I listened, as the mariner suspends the out-bound oar,  
To taste the farewell gale that breathes from off his native shore.

So gentle in thy loveliness ! alas, how could it be,  
That death would not forbear to lay his icy hand on thee ?  
Nor spare thee yet a little while, in childhood's opening bloom,  
While many a sad and weary soul was longing for the tomb . . .

Was misse a happiness too pure for erring man to know ?  
Or why did heaven so soon destroy my paradise below ?  
Enchanting as the vision was, it sunk away as soon,  
As when, in quick and cold eclipse, the sun grows dark at noon.

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\* These lines, written by a bereaved father, appeared first in a distant journal.

I loved thee, and my heart was blest ; but ere that day was spent,  
 I saw thy light and graceful form in drooping illness bent,  
 And shuddered as I cast a look upon thy fainting head ;  
 The mournful cloud was gathering there, and life was almost fled.

Days passed ; and soon the seal of death made known that hope  
 was vain ;

I knew the swiftly-wasting lamp would never burn again ;  
 The cheek was pale ; the snowy lips were gently thrown apart ;  
 And life in every passing breath seemed gushing from the heart.

I knew those marble lips to mine should never more be press'd,  
 And floods of feeling, undefined, rolled widely o'er my breast ;  
 Low, stifled sounds, and dusky forms seem'd moving in the gloom,  
 As if death's dark array were come to bear thee to the tomb.

And when I could not keep the tear from gathering in my eye,  
 Thy little hand pressed gently mine in token of reply ;  
 To ask one more exchange of love, thy look was upward cast,  
 And in that long and burning kiss, thy happy spirit pass'd !

I never trusted to have lived, to bid farewell to thee,  
 And almost said in agony, it ought not so to be ;  
 I hoped that thou, within the grave, my weary head shouldst lay,  
 And live, beloved, when I was gone, for many a happy day.

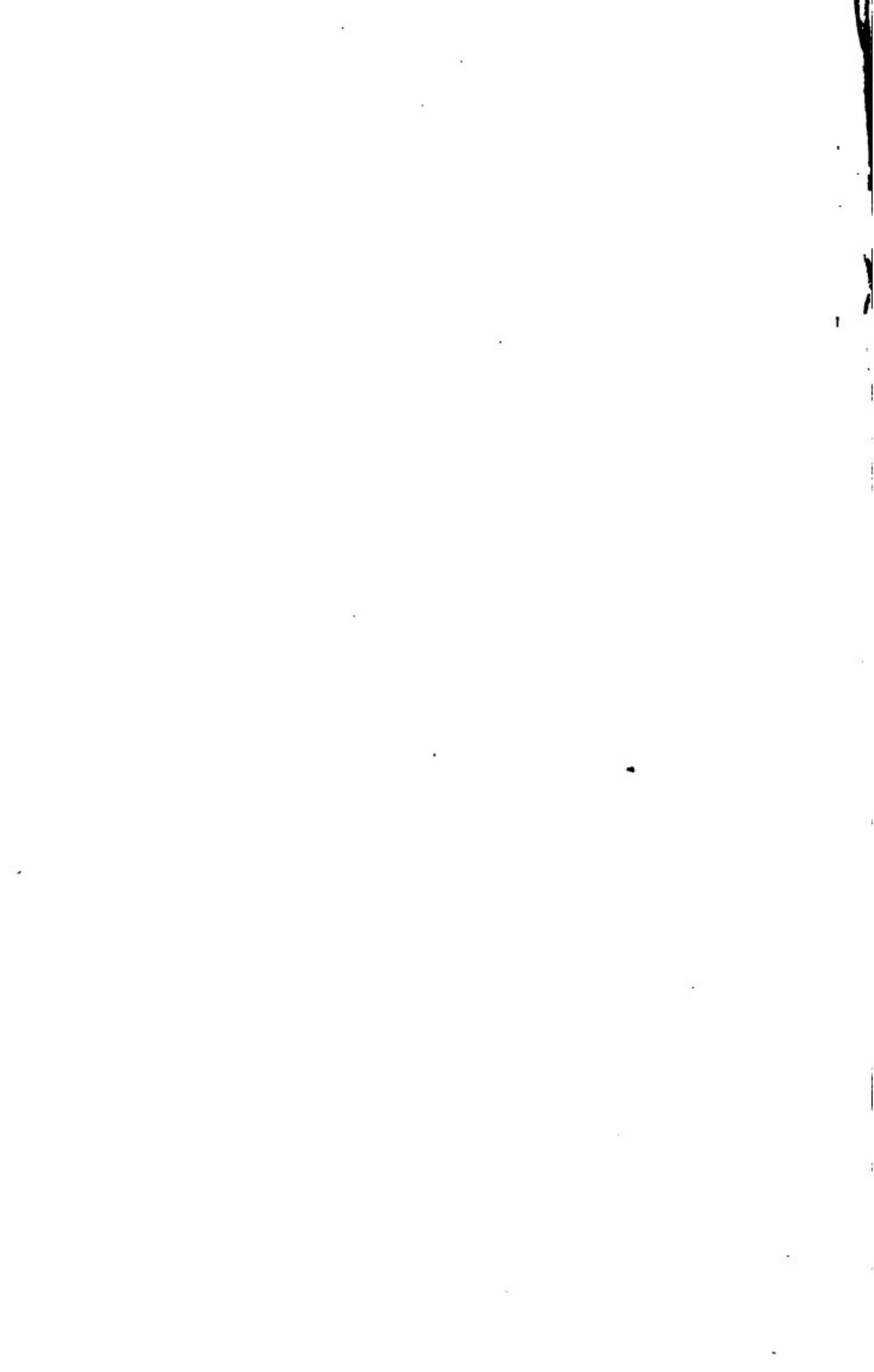
With trembling hand I vainly tried thy dying eyes to close ;  
 And almost envied, in that hour, thy calm and deep repose ;  
 For I was left in loneliness, with pain and grief oppress'd,  
 And thou wast with the sainted, where the weary are at rest

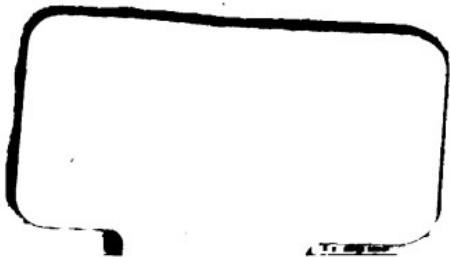
Yes ! I am sad and weary now ; but let me not repine,  
 Because a spirit, loved so well, is earlier blessed than mine ;  
 My faith may darken as it will, I shall not much deplore,  
 Since thou art where the ills of life can never reach thee more.

W. B. O. P.

THE END.







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